The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXXXIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1937 NUMBER 1204

Contents

The Week 209

Editorials

An Amendment against War? 212
Second Phase in China 214

General Articles

What to Do About Taxes ..... Harold N. Groves 215
National Eddies in Power Policy: II ..... Morris L. Cooke 217
Committees ..... Marc Frank 221
How to Look at Dancing ..... Paul Love 222
A Rebuke to Fascism ..... Leonard J. Schweitzer 224
Sheep toward Bedding (verse) ..... Conrad Pendleton 224
Shoot the Works ..... Heywood Broun 225
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 226
Other People's Money ..... John T. Flynn 227
Balanced in Light ..... Stark Young 228
The Bandwagon 229

Correspondence 229

Books in Review

Nobel Prize Novel ..... Malcolm Cowley 232
Our Reigning Families ..... I. F. Stone 233
Poets' Page ..... Muriel Rukeyser, R. P. Blackmur and Theodore Roethke 234
Some Notes on Fiction ..... Harry Thornton Moore, Shaemas O'Sheel, Beverly Thurman, Miriam Borgenicht and Florence B. Freedman 235
New Books: A Reader's List 236

Behind the Scenes in Japan

The "Panay" incident, as it develops, illuminates a sharp internal conflict in Japan. The Japanese government knows that a serious blunder has been made, and is eager to propitiate American opinion not merely by apology, indemnity and assurance against similar incidents in the future, but by full acknowledgment of the facts of intentional and ruthless attack, facts which are damning to the army and navy. The military, on the other hand, wants to deny these facts—indeed has through local representatives already done so—because of the loss of face which apology based on them would involve. If President Roosevelt's note should result in an apology from the Emperor, who is the head of the army and navy and commands infinitely more prestige than the civil government, the loss of face would be emphasized, and there would be some chance for the civil government to moderate the control now exercised over Japanese policy by the military clique.

As a background for understanding this affair, it must be remembered that in Japan the military forces are not responsible to the civil government. They can furthermore wreck any Cabinet not subservient to their will because no Minister of War or Navy can hold office without their approval, and no Cabinet can stand unless these posts are filled. The army officers are trained in the pre-war German school and most of them have little wisdom or knowledge of world affairs outside of strategic considerations. The army itself, moreover, is under the influence of a group of younger officers who are extreme nationalists and blind patriots. The international action of Japan might have been very different if these things were not so. In the long struggle by the civil government and the major economic powers of Japan to gain control over the military hierarchy, the "Panay" incident may be historic.

Differences in America Too

In the United States as well the incident has stirred up a latent conflict—that between the administration and the neutrality groups. Nobody objects to the measures taken by the President in this case, but there is strong pressure to remove our citizens and forces from China so that more of the kind will not occur. But Secretary Hull replies that the time is inopportune, and that our presence in China is the result of a long history which cannot easily be reversed. More ought to be said about the disposition to stay in China, which probably is a more powerful influence than any other in preventing the application of the Neutrality Act. For many years American citizens have been there in pursuit of trade, investment and missionary activity. As a result of the Boxer rebellion we sent troops to protect them, and troops have remained ever since. We have also insisted on retaining extraterritorial rights for the same reasons. It is not just abstract sympathy for the Chinese people that now maintains our outposts at the danger points, but a tradition built up around the very solid interests of merchants, capitalists and missionaries. People who advocate strong measures against Japan on grounds of international morality ought not to overlook this aspect of the matter.

Congress Fails

Why did the special session of Congress fail to take action on any of the measures to enact which it was called? The only positive thing it did was to forward the President's suggestion to encourage

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

housing—a faltering and probably largely ineffectual step in the direction of alleviating the new depression. The wages-and-hours bill was recommitted through the opposition of conservative Southern democrats and William Green of the A. F. of L. Its opponents were given their opportunity because even the advocates of the principle involved could not agree on the specific terms of the proposed law. The complicated farm-relief proposal also was delayed by factional and group differences. Governmental reorganization and anti-trust measures were not even touched. The explanations may be summarized under the head of lack of leadership. The Democratic Party has no real principles but is a congeries of widely differing interests and opinions, and Mr. Roosevelt has failed to forge its progressive wing into an efficient legislative instrument.

One-Word Hague

Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City apparently believes that you are a Communist if you happen to believe that Jersey City ought to be run by the established law and not by the personal whim of its mayor. You are a Communist if you believe that the Wagner Labor Relations Act gives workers in Jersey City just as much right to organize in labor unions as it does workers in all the other cities of the United States. Morris L. Ernst, attorney for the CIO, believes these things and on that account Mayor Hague, in a public statement, let go with both barrels in his vocabulary of invective. Mr. Ernst, he asserted, is a "red Communist." Despite the undeniable sting of this thrust, Mayor Hague is in the process of finding out that there are still American citizens with enough interest in the preservation of civil liberty in New Jersey to call his boisterous bluff. The organizing drive is continuing and it has behind it the support of a committee of sixty-four citizens, including, among others, Walter Lippmann, Charles A. Beard, George S. Kaufman, John Haynes Holmes, Alfred A. Knopf and Fannie Hurst. Mayor Hague will have as difficult a time convincing the world that this group is really a subsidiary of the Communist Party as he will in maintaining his stubborn resistance to the legitimate advance of union organization.

Counter-Attack in Spain

One trouble with Franco's army is that the press department is better than the general staff. For three months now the press department has been talking about the big double (or triple) offensive that would cut the Loyalists in two, isolate Madrid from Barcelona and—this time definitely—have the boys out of the trenches before Christmas. Indeed, the press department talked so fast that the general staff couldn't keep up with it. The Loyalists were forewarned, and they struck first, hard and unexpectedly, marching ahead through a snowstorm. They quickly overran 250 square miles of Fascist territory; by December 21, they were in Teruel.

That city is no great prize in itself. It is the capital of a poor and mountainous province about half of which the Loyalists hold already. Its population before the war was 13,584. But it is only sixty miles from the Mediterranean, on a beeline, and only seventy-five miles from Valencia; it has been held by the Fascists since the war began; and it has been a constant threat to the Loyalists' lines of communication. If they take it—as now seems likely—they will have opened up a new secondary road from Barcelona to Madrid, reducing the distance by at least fifty miles. Moreover, they will have brought the Aragon front much closer to the Guadalajara front, making it possible to shift troops from one to the other as needed. In any case, they have demonstrated the speed and striking power of their new army, and they have ruined Franco's plans for a winter offensive. Already, in the effort to hold Teruel, he has drawn troops and airplanes from his other fronts, and has put them under two of his best generals. It seems unlikely that he can prepare another offensive before spring. Even if the Loyalists fail to hold Teruel they will have won an important victory.

Spies in Russia—and Here

Two incidents have intrigued the public recently which give color to the fear of spies in the Soviet Union and left-wing circles. The Robinsons, supposedly two American citizens, mysteriously disappeared in Moscow. After pressing the Soviet government for information concerning them, our Department of State discovered that their passports had been obtained by fraud, the birth certificates they presented being those of children who died years ago. Publication of their photographs has not led to their identification—and this seems strange if they were, as they said, Americans and writers. Meanwhile reports came from Moscow that they had been arrested as Trotskyist suspects. Shortly after the Robinson story broke, friends of Juliet Poyntz, who for years had been prominent, first in union educational work and then in Communist activity, revealed that she had been missing for seven months. Then came a news story that she had long been a secret agent for the Immigration Bureau of the Department of Labor, which is concerned with deporting radical aliens. When things like this can happen in the United States, it becomes more credible that the Soviet government has to protect itself against a horde of spies and traitors. Meanwhile executions of old and formerly trusted Bolsheviks continue, with no evidence—beyond the official announcements—as to whether they really were traitors or simply victims of political persecution.

The Press and the Eagle Strike

A letter in the correspondence section of our last issue by I. Kaufman, chairman of the Brooklyn Eagle Strike Committee, calls attention to the violent editorial campaign the New York City newspapers have conducted against the secondary boycott as a weapon of labor warfare. The attack on secondary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

picketing is only part of the picture. During the thirteen weeks the Eagle strike has already lasted, the case of the 250 striking newspapermen has had a great deal less than a fair hearing in the metropolitan press. Legitimate news stories have been "played down" and the news columns have been filled with backhanded jabs at the character of the strike. There is enough evidence to show beyond reasonable doubt that the publishers of the larger dailies have seen fit to present the Eagle strike in a most unfavorable light. For example, the speech of Merwin K. Hart, president of the New York State Economic Council, in which he made a bitter attack upon the strikers, received space in all the papers, while a radio address by Alexander Woollcott, presenting the opposite side of the conflict, was ignored. On top of the virtual silence about the strikers' side of the struggle, came the vigorous editorial campaign against secondary picketing. Some estimate of the importance of the Eagle strike may be gained by observing how completely the metropolitan papers have been willing to desert the standards of decent journalism in reporting its progress.

Sokolsky's Opinions

A question of ethics is raised by the article of George E. Sokolsky in The New York Herald Tribune of Monday, December 20. Mr. Sokolsky is a regular weekly contributor to that journal; his contributions are published as a feature on the editorial page, and we assume that The Herald Tribune pays for them. In this one he reveals that he has for some time been "an industrial counselor," "a sort of consultant for the National Association of Manufacturers" and subsequently for the American Iron and Steel Institute. Now, there is no law to prevent Mr. Sokolsky from airing his opinions on labor and other public questions while he is working for reactionary employers. Doubtless it is true, as he says, that he got his opinions first and his business associations afterwards, rather than the other way round. Yet there is a sort of delicacy about this sort of thing in newspaper circles. A reporter or editorial writer or a serious columnist is commonly supposed to be working for his paper, and to avoid entangling alliances with the business interests he is discussing —at least unless those alliances are frankly disclosed at the time of writing. Much as we disagree, for instance, with some of the opinions expressed by Dorothy Thompson or Walter Lippmann, we should not expect either of those writers or The Herald Tribune to tolerate a business relationship between them and big industrialists or financiers who have a stake in the public matters they discuss.

Hartley Barclay, Editor

Hartley W. Barclay, editor of Mill and Factory, which Ayer's Newspaper Directory says has no circulation but a "controlled free distribution," has achieved more notoriety in the past few weeks than he has ever enjoyed before. His method to this end was to ignore a subpoena calling him before the National Labor Relations Board's hearings in progress at Steubenville, Ohio, to testify on charges of Wagner Act violations brought against the Weirton Steel Company by the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee. Mr. Barclay was wanted because a special edition of Mill and Factory, devoted to an attack on the NLRB, had been distributed to workers in the Weirton plant, and all the evidence suggested that the issue had been published with the support of the company in order to discourage unionization. If this were true, it might be considered an example of unfair labor practice, as defined by the Wagner Act, and material evidence in the course of the hearing. The idea of appearing before the NLRB examiners was apparently most repugnant to Mr. Barclay. He cried that Freedom of the Press was imperiled, defied the subpoena and remained in New York City to speak at the annual meeting of the National Industrial Council on a program arranged by the National Association of Manufacturers. Freedom of the press is clearly not the issue involved in this case. The NLRB was interested only in the part the Weirton Steel Company had played in producing anti-union propaganda. The NLRB was plainly acting within its right to call witnesses who may have evidence pertaining to the matter under investigation.

Queer Doings on The Mirror

Some curious information about The New York Daily Mirror, a tabloid newspaper generally assumed to be owned by W. R. Hearst, has just come to light. The National Labor Relations Board has been holding hearings on the request of the Newspaper Guild to be certified as collective-bargaining agent for The Mirror. The testimony showed an amazingly close and candid relation between advertising and editorial departments, with advertisers and potential advertisers praised in the news columns and columnists on the advertising-department payroll. We summarize from The Guild Reporter:

> Julian Seaman, music critic, said he receives both a salary and a 10-percent commission on the advertising he obtains.
>
> Thomas Warnock, "author" of a signed column of travel news, said he is actually an advertising solicitor, and does not write the column he signs, which is made up of publicity from steamship, railroad and other travel agencies.
>
> Sam Boal, rewrite man, said he had frequently been called upon to prepare "blurbs" for such department stores as R. H. Macy and Company, Gimbel Brothers, Namm's and Hearn's. Amos Landman, another rewrite man, said that in a prize contest conducted by The Mirror in connection with the RKO Theatres, he was told by the secretary of the circulation manager to pick the winners on a "geographic basis."
>
> The authors of two columns dealing with amusements and with food both testified they are paid by the advertising department. The editor of the Gladys Glad beauty column said certain preparations have been praised in that column at the request of the advertising solicitors.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is nothing new about any of these practices. They have gone on for decades in the United States. We admit, however, that we are startled to see them turn up in New York City, journalistic pacemaker for the nation. Even Mr. Hearst, despite all his many other newspaper sins, has usually conducted his periodicals with deference to what are commonly considered sound advertising practices. Always in the past, the kind of thing The Mirror has lately been doing has been a sign of weakness, not of strength.

Out of the Ivory Tower

The Second Annual American Artists' Congress met in New York City over the week-end of December 19 and demonstrated again how many creative workers have nowadays abandoned the old doctrine of the ivory tower. Numerous painters and sculptors of national and international reputation joined in the discussion of the place of the artist in the world of today. Messages from Thomas Mann and Pablo Picasso reiterated the belief, as Mann expressed it, that "the different spheres of humanity—whether artistic, cultural or political—are really inseparable" and that the artists should stand together against "those barbaric tendencies which today endanger all that we understand by civilization and culture, and all that we love." In their own realm of affairs, the artists attacked such censorship as was recently inflicted upon Rockwell Kent, opposed discrimination against Negro artists and demanded that the coming New York World's Fair should show the work of contemporaries. The Congress also passed a group of resolutions such as might be expected from almost any left-wing conference. They supported trade unionism for everybody, including artists; demanded freedom for Tom Mooney; praised Mr. Roosevelt's Chicago "quarantine" speech; approved the federal anti-lynching bill, and attacked Mayor Hague, the Jersey City dictator.

Not so Many Rubber Workers

In an editorial, "Educating the Workers," in our issue of December 22, we referred to the United Rubber Workers as having a membership of 775,000 members. This was a typographical error, the correct figure being 75,000.

News Notes of a Week

Foreign Minister Delbos of France stopped off in Belgrade and Prague on his swing around the capitals of Central Europe and with these two visits completed his task of taking inventory on his country's system of post-war alliances. . . . Robert Worth Bingham, United States Ambassador to Great Britain, died on December 18. . . . General Friedrich Wilhelm Erich Ludendorff, chief strategist of the German Army during the latter half of the World War, died on December 21 at seventy-two.

At home, the fourteen seamen of the "Algic" crew, who were arrested because of their participation in a strike in the Montevideo harbor, were found guilty of mutiny under a law passed in 1790 and faved maximum punishment of five years' imprisonment, or $1,000 fine, or both. . . . An extraordinarily harsh sentence was passed against sixty pickets arrested in the Horn and Hardart Automat strike by Magistrate Anthony Burke of New York City. They were given from thirty to ninety days in jail without alternative of fine, a sentence that was immediately protested by leaders of the strike. . . . Dr. Glenn Frank, former president of the University of Wisconsin, was picked as chairman of the committee organized to find a set of principles for the Republican Party. . . . The first national convention of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee met in Pittsburgh and resolved to carry on the fight against "Little Steel." . . . The government was upheld by a decision of the Supreme Court when it denied three Liberty-bond holders the right to go on receiving interest on bonds redeemed in 1935—a right they claimed because the government had not redeemed them in the promised gold. In another decision the Court held, by a vote of seven to two, that evidence obtained by tapping telephone wires cannot be used in criminal trials.

An Amendment against War?

WHEN ENOUGH members of the House of Representatives signed a petition to bring the Ludlow resolution to a vote, light was thrown on a sharp division in ideas about American national policy. The resolution proposes a constitutional amendment forbidding Congress to declare war without the support of a majority of voters in a popular referendum, except in the event of invasion of the United States by a foreign power. The final signatures to the petition were affixed at the very moment when the President and the country were absorbed in protests to Japan about the "Panay" incident, and gave evidence of a wide and deeply felt reluctance to become embroiled in any hostilities on foreign soil. On the other hand, the filing of the petition gave rise to strong opposition on the part of editorial writers and news commentators, and even of the President himself, who in response to a question indicated that the proposal was not in accord with representative government. It is worth while to stop a moment and analyze the reasons for and against this measure, because they imply much more than has been frankly stated.

Back of the proposed amendment are a number of well defined convictions, which are probably shared by a large majority of American citizens. One is that our participation in the World War was a mistake; that it caused irretrievable losses without winning what we were assured it was being fought for. Another is that the miseries and costs of modern war are so great that there can be no good reason for fighting, save only defense of our own country against invasion. At least, the common man who is going to do the fighting and suffering

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ought to have a chance to decide, in specific cases, whether any other reason is good enough. And closely linked with this conviction is the suspicion that even representative government cannot be trusted not to get itself involved in a war situation through the devious channels of diplomacy and under the pressure of interests and propaganda. It should always be checked by the consciousness that it cannot wage war without first convincing a majority of the voters that war ought to be waged.

The objections on the other side do not go so far as directly to oppose these convictions. They point out, however, the fact that such a demonstration of pacific feeling weakened the government's position in maintaining a stiff front in the Yangtze incident, and furthermore that we cannot induce respect for our representatives or protect our citizens and economic interests abroad if there is always uncertainty whether, if hostilities should become necessary to back up the President, the voters would authorize them. The government must have ability to make threats that can, if necessary, be carried out, if it is to act the role which this country must play as a world power. Force is the ultimate basis of power. Without the possibility of its use the diplomats are brandishing a stuffed club. The consequence of such a constitutional amendment would therefore be that we should be impotent to protect ourselves against injuries which in fact would eventually push us into war. Another way of stating this position is to say that if we fail, by threats, to prevent the growth and boldness of potential enemies, they may some time invade this country and so make war inevitable.

There is truth in both positions; the gulf lies between their basic assumptions. The people who do not want to fight except in defense against invasion are exhibiting solid common sense. No interest in trade or finance, no moral conceptions, no sympathy for other peoples can possibly involve issues so important as to outweigh the certain losses of war. Most wars do not win what they are fought for or, if they do, then the objective is not worth fighting for. And it certainly is true that peoples can be precipitated by governments into wars that those peoples do not want. On the other hand, power politics of the traditional kind is much hampered if the fear of force is removed from the diplomatic background. We cannot play the role of a world power, with a finger in every pie that interests us, so long as it is known that we probably will not fight except in literal self-defense. If we are going to get angry enough to fight because of injuries to our ships or trade or citizens abroad, then it is more prudent to try to prevent those injuries by making ourselves feared and respected before the injuries become too serious. It is unlikely that any power or combination of powers would actually invade the continental United States under any circumstances, however, so long as we make plain our determination to resist invasion and maintain the military and naval power to do so successfully.

The basic difference concerns the exercise of power politics itself and the importance of the concerns which it is supposed to protect. The majority of the people are perfectly willing to allow trading and investment abroad, but they would much rather abandon it all than to lose one American life or spend one dollar in fighting for it. They oppose injustice in the world and have friendly feelings for nations whose actions they approve, but they do not want to run even the slightest risk of war in order to enforce that opposition or that friendship. Those on the other side really do care enough about these concerns, however, to accept the risks involved in doing something about them. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that many opponents of the Ludlow resolution look forward to a time when the United States will be called upon to fight on the side of Britain, France, Soviet Russia and China against Germany, Italy and Japan, and would favor responding to the call.

We believe the convictions back of the Ludlow resolution are valid, and that if the government is to respect them it must dispense with the traditional ideas and methods of diplomacy. This does not mean abandoning all contact with the world and living within our shell, but it does mean adopting the attitude of a peaceful citizen who welcomes business if it can be earned by good will, but withdraws his activities from any area which resents his presence or where he merely gets into trouble. It means adopting the attitude toward the world which is exemplified, not by a great military or naval power, but by Holland or Denmark or Norway.

If so much is granted, then of course it becomes pertinent to inquire whether a war referendum is a sufficient way of attaining the assurance desired. In this respect the objections make more sense. The President, who not only is in charge of foreign relations but is in command of the army and navy, can carry on a dispute with a foreign power and even conduct hostilities abroad without any declaration of war whatever. This kind of activity is usually seen in "backward" countries against "bandits," to be sure, as it was in Mexico under President Wilson, who not only landed Marines but even sent an army to chase Pancho Villa. But it can easily lead to more extensive war. A still more serious objection is that diplomatic and executive action, coupled with a long history of incidents, speeches and newspaper and radio agitation, can get the voters themselves into a fighting mood, so that the referendum would, when the crisis comes, be merely an empty gesture. Wars, even the most futile or unjust, are seldom fought without popular approval at the time.

What is really needed most is not this check on war after the crisis has become acute, but adequate means of preventing a crisis from occurring. Neutrality legislation of the kind already passed by Congress is a fumbling but hopeful step in this direction. The Ludlow resolution is significant principally as an indication to the administration of certain homely truths about how the people feel, which it should not disregard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Second Phase in China

WITH THE capture of Nanking, the first phase of the Sino-Japanese war comes to an end. Chinese leaders, both civil and military, although of course they did not publicly admit it, expected from the beginning that Japan would overrun the eastern seaboard. They recognized the fact that superior military equipment, accumulated over the course of many years, would give Japan a marked advantage in combat between masses of soldiers in direct contact with each other. Their strategy assumed the probable loss of several of the main cities of the east. The capture of these cities does not mean that the war is over; on the contrary, in a time sense, it may be only beginning.

One of the valuable results of the understanding between Nanking and the Chinese Communists, arranged a few months ago, was that Chiang Kai-shek gained the advantage of the guerilla tactics that the communists had used so successfully against his own men. It is these tactics that we may expect to see employed against Japan from now on. Under them, the Chinese forces will avoid direct engagements with large bodies of Japanese troops wherever possible. Instead, they will harass the invaders, attacking their outposts and crippling their lines of communication. Civilians will be sent out to deceive the enemy by marching disguised as soldiers, while the actual forces advance disguised as civilians. Everything will be done to break the morale of the foe, and to make his campaign as expensive as possible.

What will be the outcome of this guerilla warfare, it is impossible now to predict. Thus far, the Japanese have had marked superiority in the air; China's losses of airplanes have been enormous, 80 percent of them, according to recent reports, having resulted from lack of skill or bad judgment by the Chinese themselves. While Chiang Kai-shek has apparently received some airplanes and possibly some aviators recently from Soviet Russia, these have not been very numerous. Guerilla troops that are practically without airplanes are at a grave disadvantage in fighting an army that is well equipped in the air. Another somewhat similar obstacle is the modern high-speed tank which can be used across open country. However, large areas in China present difficulties both for airplanes and tanks, and in general the lack of good roads would make the problem of the Japanese Service of Supply extremely difficult.

In terms of cost, operations of this type would put a burden on the invader tremendously more heavy than that of the defender. The Chinese troops can almost literally live off the countryside; the Japanese cannot. China will of course find it necessary to obtain munitions, but that is not an insuperable obstacle as long as the way remains clear in the South. (We may assume that France will give only lip-service to her pledge against permitting the import of arms through Indo-China.) With any sort of luck, the Chinese can hold out for a long time under these circumstances.

How long can the Japanese hold out? We must not repeat the mistakes made during the Great War, when so-called experts told us over and over again that Germany could keep going only a few weeks longer. We must remember that Japan now has the very large economic resources of North China at her command. She is also collecting substantial revenue in the cities she has conquered. Against these things we must set the undoubted fact that her economic position at home is extremely bad. Military expenditures, which just before the occupation of Manchukuo took only 31 percent of the budget, today take about half of a total expenditure that has itself doubled in six years. The difference is largely obtained from internal bond issues, although taxation is also extremely serious. Her excess of imports over exports is reported to have doubled in a year. China has heretofore been an extremely important customer for Japanese manufactured goods, and it is a question whether Japan can continue this trade at the point of the bayonet.

These facts make altogether incomprehensible the policy of President Roosevelt in failing to apply in the Far East the American neutrality law. The basis on which he refrained was not, of course, the fact that no declaration of war had taken place, but that he wished to act against Japan but not China. Actually, however, putting the neutrality law into effect would have restricted Japan very much more than China. Japan has been buying from us oil, munitions and the raw materials of munitions such as scrap iron and steel, and our trade is vital to her economy. It is worth remembering that the Japanese bombs that sank the "Panay" may have contained American metal. If we had put the neutrality law into effect the moment the war began, Japan would be far nearer to making peace because of complete exhaustion than she is today.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1937, IN THE U. S., BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK.

Editors

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

Assistant Editors

T. R. CARSKADON OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

Contributing Editors

H. N. BRAILSFORD HEYWOOD BROUN JOHN T. FLYNN
WALDO FRANK E. C. LINDEMAN W. P. MANGOLD
JON. MITCHELL LEWIS MUMFORD R. G. TUGWELL

Treasurer

DANIEL MEBANE

E. G. WOOD, *Advertising Manager* — BYRON DEXTER, *Circulation Manager*

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What to Do About Taxes

IT HAS been said that the scope of government is bounded on the north by the resources of the state, on the east by the requirements of private consumption and saving, on the west by the wisdom and honesty of public officials and on the south by the efficiency of the tax system. Of these frontiers, it is the tax system that offers the most formidable limitation to the increasing usefulness of the federal government.

In the first of this short series of articles an attempt will be made to show that the tax system is doing its job very inadequately; that this is not due to limitations imposed by the private economy (including our present depression), or the resources of the nation; and that the difficulties are within the tax system itself. The second and third articles will discuss these difficulties in detail and make recommendations as to how we should deal with them. This will involve an examination of some of our important tax institutions. In addition, the third article will draw the recommendations into a tax program.

Should the Budget Be Balanced?—The tax system has an important role to play in our present situation. Six months ago it would have been generally agreed that its first and most important obligation was to balance the budget. Whatever emergency justification for deficits there might have been during the preceding years had ceased. Does the same conclusion still hold, now that a new depression in business has arrived? The answer depends entirely on how it is proposed to bring about a balanced budget. No doubt a drastic reduction in useful governmental expenditure, including unemployment relief, for which the need is increasing, would be bad depression finance. But to balance the budget by increased taxation of the right sort is quite another matter. It can be said emphatically that the depression does not call for a closed season on programs for stricter income and inheritance taxes. Passive acceptance of a tax system which fails to meet its current responsibilities has continued long enough.

It is idle to consider a program to retire our public debt while we are still uncertain about balancing the budget. Nevertheless, it may be recalled that the recurring deficits of the last seven years have been justified by many on the ground that "a cyclical budget" was being substituted for an annual one. The cyclical budget calls for a retirement program as soon as we emerge sufficiently from depression. Some people are naturally curious to know when the second phase of the cyclical budget is likely to begin.

Aid to the States.—When the tax system has balanced the budget and got a retirement program under way, it has only begun to do its duty. While the federal finances have had the spotlight, the states and municipalities have been struggling along with responsibilities several sizes too large for them. The tax resources of the states are very inferior to those of the federal government. There is, of course, the general property tax. The property tax is made up of several widely different elements. As a levy on urban land, it is defensible and there is not much danger of its becoming excessive. As a tax upon urban improvements, it represents a heavy load upon shelter, a necessity of life which would be expensive enough without this extra burden. It seems odd that we should have singled out for especially heavy taxation under the property tax an interest which we now seek to subsidize as "low-cost housing." As a tax on rural property, this tax has aggravated the difficult agricultural problem of recent years. As a tax on intangible property, it is a failure. At all events, there has been a revolt against the general property tax during the depression, and many jurisdictions have found that there is a bottom to the property-tax barrel.

Some states have turned to the net income tax for revenue. Others have found constitutional barriers in this direction. Income taxes are a minor, not to say a negligible, source of revenue in all but a handful of industrial states. In all states, income (and inheritance) taxes are limited by the threats of migration which wealth and industry constantly hold over the heads of state legislatures and Governors. The bravest state officials are likely to get the jitters when it is whispered that the big taxpayers are about to move out on them. The state income tax has not reached the end of its development, but that development is likely to be slow and limited.

About half of the states in recent years have adopted the general retail sales tax. This is a regressive tax on the necessities of life. In a country with our resources and our poverty it should not be necessary to resort to such taxes. However, they do produce the required revenue.

Education Needs Support.—Meanwhile some of the important functions left in charge of the states have been provided for very inadequately. The Senate Committee on Education and Labor, which held hearings on the Black Federal Aid for Education Bill, submitted the following evidence of diverse educational standards throughout the states:

> The average length of the school term ranges from six and one-half to nine and one-half months.
>
> The ratio of high-school enrolment to total enrolment ranges from 10.6 to 30.9 percent.
>
> Illiteracy among the population over ten years of age runs from .8 percent in some Northern states to 14.9 percent in the South.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Average annual expenditures per pupil on current operating costs range from $24.50 to $137.69.

Average annual salary per teacher ranges from $465 to $2,361.

Value of public-school property per pupil ranges from $62 to $570.

On their face, these facts seem to make a clear case for federal aid for education, so plainly of national interest. Is the federal tax system equal to this additional load?

If We Had the Money.—It has long been recognized that the federal government could spend money to exceedingly good advantage on a more extensive program of public housing. Housing is not only a national need of first importance, but it lies in the building industry, which has a strategic position in recovery. Private housing is fatally handicapped because most of the potential market is short of the necessary purchasing power to finance a private building program. The field of public health (in which there is clearly a national public interest) has hardly yet been scratched. The social-security program, too, leaves much to be desired in its standards. But "where is the money coming from?"

Needs of the Private Economy.—The limiting factor in federal finance is not a matter of disturbing the private economy. It is argued by some that every addition to the tax load is at the expense of private production, private wealth and the private standard of living. We frequently hear it said that the government spends one-fifth of the national income as though there were a leak in the economy that drained off huge quantities of nourishment and vitality. But the government is part of the economy, not separate from it. A large part of the national income is produced *by* as well as *for* government. To produce goods and satisfy wants coöperatively does not mean that less will be produced and consumed.

It may be argued that direct taxes tend to reduce inequalities and that the latter are necessary for maximum production. It may be contended that more equal division would mean less to divide. But it is at least equally plausible to maintain that the existing inequalities are a limiting factor in production and that a more even distribution of income would involve a better market, which in turn would make possible the production and enjoyment of larger amounts of goods and services. For many years economists have been concerned lest a shortage of capital arise from fiscal policy. However, nothing in our economic situation, present or in prospect, seems to point toward such a shortage.

Taxation and the Depression of 1937.—It is said that taxation and the high cost of government are responsible for the current business decline. This is the same "Wolf! Wolf!" that we heard in 1929. If the cry has any logic at all, it is that business men have hesitated to venture into new undertakings or to expand old ones, because capital (due to taxation) has been too scarce, and prospects for profit too slim. But the evidence shows that capital has been cheap and abundant, and that profits and rates of profit have made an impressive comeback (to say the least) under present tax institutions. Buyers of stocks had sufficient confidence in the future to support a stock boom. Yet, when a recession appears, it is laid to the tax system, and many people in Washington and elsewhere, who should know better, take this talk seriously.

To argue that the current business decline necessitates reopening all the tax loopholes so laboriously plugged up during the last three years, and returning to the income-tax schedules of the late twenties is nothing more than an attempt to capitalize upon a fear psychology. Does anyone really believe that in return for tax concessions of this sort private business would present the President and Congress with prosperity upon a platter? There are many theories of business cycles and depressions, but none that justifies the hysterical surrender of sound sources of public revenue at a time when they are most urgently needed.

For many months we were told that there was little need to strengthen the tax system, because in due time the recovery of national income would take care of an accumulating deficit. Now that further recovery is not an immediate prospect, the business situation is cited as reason for retreat from the short advances in taxation made during the depression. It is a case of neglecting to repair the house roof while the sun is shining and then finding it impossible to do so when it begins to rain. Nobody likes to pay high taxes, and few, if any, enjoy inflicting them upon others. But it is a discipline we will have to get used to. We may as well begin now by resisting the pressure to reduce and weaken the income tax during the present period.

Taxpaying Capacity.—Nor are our people lacking in taxpaying capacity. If nature were the limiting factor in public finance, the United States would have an exceedingly easy time financing government. We are favored by magnificent resources of wheat and cotton land, of iron, coal and oil. Having arrived late in the family of nations, we have no overpopulation problem. However, institutions are far more of a limiting factor than resources.

It has been calculated that less than four percent of the people of voting age are paying direct taxes for the support of the federal government. Out of a mature population of some 75,000,000, only 5,500,000 people filed returns this year, and of this number somewhat less than half paid a federal tax. In Great Britain, with lower per-capita incomes, between a quarter and a third of the mature population filed reports for the British income tax, and of this number about 40 percent paid a tax. Of course, the British do not have our large farm population, but even allowing for this fact, the difference is sufficiently striking.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this country, at the present time, a married man with three children pays no federal income tax (assuming the income to be "earned income") unless his income is over $4,100. The British citizen with this amount of income and under similar conditions pays $257 in income taxes.

Under the federal estates tax, an individual may leave an estate of $80,000 (half of which is insurance) and pay no tax. The minimum tax in Great Britain would amount to $6,400. If the British schedule of income and inheritance taxes were applied to our American situation, it would produce from two to three times as much revenue as we now collect through our federal and state income and inheritance taxes combined.

Depression Changes in the Tax Rates.—It is one of the most striking facts of recent taxation history that during the period from 1932 to the present, when deficits piled on deficits and grave fears were expressed lest inflation drag us into chaos, not only were the taxes on incomes below $10,000 not increased, but in cases where the income is all earned (*e.g.*, salary) the taxes were actually decreased. The following figures show the trend under the three latest revenue acts which modified the rates:

TAXES PAID BY A MARRIED TAXPAYER, NO DEPENDENTS, ALL INCOME EARNED

Income	1928	1932	1934
$ 4,000	5.63	60	44
6,000	28.13	140	116
8,000	56.25	300	248
10,000	101.25	480	415

It is true that our top rates in the upper brackets are very high—somewhat higher than the top rates employed in Great Britain and about equal to the rates applied in this country during the War. However, it is one thing to impose these taxes and quite another to make them effective. It would be interesting to compare the *effective* rate on the "net annual acquisition of economic power" of certain taxpayers with the nominal rates of the law. This would be one method of presenting quantitatively the importance of loopholes. The Roosevelt administration, during its five years in power, has raised the level of the income tax, but most of the boosting has been in the upper and upper-middle brackets. There is still plenty of elasticity in the lower and lower-middle ranges of income. And there remains the problem of making the high taxes work.

Thus the inadequate product of the tax system is not due to the necessities of the private economy. The present business decline does not call for a moratorium on income taxes. Nor is the inadequacy due to insufficient resources or taxpaying capacity. The limiting factors in government finance are within the tax system itself—administrative, political and legal factors. These factors will be discussed in greater detail in future articles. If the tax machine cannot carry the tax load which has been or will be assigned to it, the reason is that the machine is poorly designed, or in bad repair, or both.

HAROLD M. GROVES.

This is the first of three articles on our tax system. The second will appear in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

Eddies in National Power Policy: II

WHEN Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, gets out of step with national power policy one cannot call it a ripple, it is a real eddy. First, this is because Dr. Morgan is an engineer of widely recognized attainments, a creative educator and inspiring teacher, and a public-spirited citizen; and second, because as a government official his function includes not only widespread planning but administrative execution on an important scale. Dr. Morgan both in speaking and writing has in recent months elaborated ideas as to the theory and practice of regulating private utilities not shared by the rank and file of those who, beginning about the time of President Theodore Roosevelt and under his active leadership, have struggled to put the government—local, state and federal—in command of the utility situation.

Dr. Morgan, for instance, believes in pooled power where government and the private industry sit as equals on a board of control. He would dispose of government-generated power only to "natural regions"—which is equivalent to preventing the sale of government energy except to private companies. In fixing the price to be paid by a municipality for a privately owned utility property, he would add promoter's profits to fair value. And his concern for preserving the integrity of the private industry makes him at times an apologetic advocate of public rights. These points of view are those of the private interests—not of the public. They are views quite generally held in the early nineties. Their adoption at this time would destroy much that has been gained.

To understand fully Dr. Morgan's present-day attitude toward public power, one must go back more than twenty-five years, to March 25, 1913, when high water on the Miami River caused the Dayton flood and the loss of many lives. A board of three prominent citizens was appointed to make engineering plans for controlling future floods, and Morgan, then head of the Morgan Engineering

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Company, was retained as chief engineer. If there were to be dams there might be public power. But no legislation permitting public-power development could get through the private-utility-controlled Ohio Legislature. So in recognition of this situation Dr. Morgan and his colleagues borrowed an English conservancy act as the basis for the Ohio statute. The three utility lawyers who collaborated in writing the law also obtained their convenient "conservancy" views from similar old English usage pertaining almost exclusively to the drainage of excess waters from swamps in England. There never was power of any kind—mechanical or electrical—in English conservancy. Water-power development, of which there is a minimum in level England, always requires special legislation. As might be expected under the Ohio act as passed, conservancy districts are not allowed to generate and purvey power. They probably have the right to lease out power sites, but even about this there is a difference of opinion.

When it came to constructing dams on the Miami Dr. Morgan was "primarily responsible"—to use his own words—for having the court make a finding that "the dams should not be used for power development or for storage." But this was not enough to satisfy his understanding of controlling Ohio opinion, so he put a granite block in each of the dams, reading, "The dams of the Miami Conservancy District are for flood-control purposes. Their use for power development or for storage would be a menace to the cities below."

As these five reservoirs of the Miami Conservancy District have never been 50-percent full, it is obvious that Dayton and down-stream on the Miami have received ample protection. Some of this protection, however, appears to have been at the expense of points beyond. In fact this project is an outstanding example of uncoördinated flood control. It has local, but not national significance. Many of the best informed engineers believe that if these gateless retarding dams had not been built, the crest at Cincinnati in 1933 would have been three or more feet lower. The greater part of the water in the Miami Valley would have run out into the Ohio and on to the Mississippi before the Scioto River water reached Cincinnati.

It must be frankly admitted that when these single-purpose flood-control dams were built on the Miami River nearly twenty-five years ago, there were few engineers who believed in multiple-purpose dams. The following extract from a letter dated March 7, 1935, from Robert E. Horton, a distinguished consulting hydraulic engineer, expresses perhaps the best modern view:

> I believe firmly—though I have no exact calculations before me—that the power which could have been produced by the Miami projects built as storage reservoirs would have carried all or a large part of the burden of costs, which has, in effect, and there is no mistaking it, had to be carried by direct taxation and which has therefore been a total loss because there have been no floods down to date since these reservoirs were built which really required the use of reservoirs. . . . Much has been learned in recent years about the economies and hydrology of operation of reservoirs in reservoir systems. Given a well worked out operating schedule, there is no reason why a system of reservoirs may not provide adequately for flood control or flood relief and at the same time furnish a large amount of excellent grade of power, not merely secondary power.

In the twenty years between the completion of the Miami works and the beginning of the New Deal, Dr. Morgan divided his time between drainage and other types of engineering carried on by his firm, and educational work principally in Dayton and at Yellow Springs, Ohio. In the middle twenties he was a member of the advisory committee of the Pennsylvania Giant Power Survey, of which I was director. I recall his advocacy at that time of a school at which utility cost-finding would be taught. This was to have been in connection with Antioch College, of which he was president. He also expressed his grave doubts as to the desirability of public ownership. In one of the monthly leaflets sent out by Antioch not long before he took his post with the TVA, Dr. Morgan remarked that if all utilities were as honest and efficient as the American Telephone and Telegraph Company there would be no need of regulation. However that may be, it took an investigation and the expenditure of a large part of the $700,000 voted by Congress, to obtain from this company two recent rate reductions on long-distance tolls representing a total saving to consumers of $20,000,000 annually. But in these two decades between 1913 and 1933, during which the public-utility issue really developed and during which there was hard fighting all over the country for the preservation of public rights, Dr. Morgan took no active part. This is not said in criticism, for he was doubtless fully occupied elsewhere. But the fact that he escaped the experiences of those years partly accounts for his present point of view.

Early in 1933, before his appointment as chairman of the TVA Board, Dr. Morgan was in Washington with a delegation advocating a large allotment for flood-control works on the Muskingum River in Ohio. He suggested at that time that this was a much more promising scene than the Tennessee Valley for the non-power activities—flood control, reforestation, soil conservation, recreation and the like—which President Roosevelt had announced would be added to the river developments, including power, covered in the original Tennessee River legislation sponsored by Senator Norris.

Over $22,000,000 of Public Works Authority money was allotted to the Muskingum Conservancy District—a scheme including fifteen dams but no power. A census in 1880 had shown 253 water-power plants—most of them of course quite small—in existence in the Muskingum area. In part through economic, but largely through private-power-company pressure, and because American engineering has become obsessed as to the virtue of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

large-scale centralized generation, practically all these power plants disappeared. Quite in contrast, during the last ten to fifteen years Henry Ford has developed and is using for manufacturing automobile parts five small water-power sites on the River Rouge in Michigan, and he plans to develop others.

A report on the water resources of the Muskingum drainage area by the Dayton-Morgan Engineering Company advising against *present* hydro developments in this area ends quaintly (in view of the fact that under the same engineering advice fifteen powerless dams are now built) by saying that "there exists the potential possibility of future [power] development that should not be overlooked."

Just prior to the White House conference on the power pool in October, 1936, Dr. Morgan presented to his fellow government conferees a memorandum covering the policies which he thought should control in making this inquiry into the possibility of a union of public and private interests in the Tennessee Valley along "grid" lines. This memorandum promptly found its way to the utilities and the press and therefore is not privileged. The most significant proposal in this document was to the effect that government and the private power interests should have equal status on the board to formulate power policy in the Tennessee Valley. Experience has shown that a liberal administration cannot command the confidence of the power interests. Whenever a liberal administration consents to join forces with the power interests, it will forfeit its right to define the purpose of its struggle. To accept the power interests in a position of equal status with the government will mean that a national power policy cannot be developed except on their terms.

This memorandum further urged that in estimating the value of a utility property the fair value have added to it certain other items, including compensation for "services in initiating and ensuring useful development." These are promoters' profits undisguised. This claim has often been urged by the private utility industry but never accepted by regulating bodies acting in the public interest. Allowances for promoters' profits and write-ups of capital assets to reflect added value due to the initiating activity of "men of capacity" have been the usual way whereby promoters have been compensated for undertaking the "effort, financial expenditure and risk required in effort to create a great productive organization." It is Dr. Morgan's suggestion that the TVA should not sell current to any city which in buying the private-property plant does not include these promoters' compensations—in addition, mind you, to fair value!

Dr. Morgan has recently written a series of articles in The Survey, The New York Times, The Saturday Evening Post, The Atlantic Monthly and elsewhere principally devoted to the power aspects of the TVA project. These articles are quite revealing, and repeat many of the private-company slogans with which we have become familiar during the last quarter-century. These articles show that Dr. Morgan is quite unfamiliar with the history and techniques of regulation. He recommends, for instance, arbitration as a means of reaching fair value. This seemingly fair proposal has never to my knowledge actually gone through in an important situation. It is frequently advanced as a means of delay. Again, Dr. Morgan is an advocate of "severance damages," which of all the intangible items of value associated with the reproduction-cost-new method of valuation is the most intangible. The item is supposed to cover loss in value resulting from the separation of one part of a plant from the balance. Some such loss, no doubt, is always present in any sale, but it is supposed to be covered in the purchase price. The effort sometimes made to determine it as an item by itself leads one into a maze of imaginary values. This contention reminds me of a boy on a New Hampshire roadside who offered peaches out of a partly filled basket at so much apiece. When I asked him what he would take for his entire supply he would not sell at any price because he wanted to remain in business.

Unfortunately there is no legally orthodox, satisfactory method of valuing public utilities at this time. The law of the land calls for the reproduction-cost-new method, but I imagine that this line of reasoning is on the whole almost as distasteful at the moment to the private industry as it has been right along to the defenders of the public interests, who have been almost a unit in advocating Mr. Justice Brandeis' prudent-investment method of valuation. Since the 1929 debacle something akin to the sporting instinct has kept those on the public side from pressing valuation on the reproduction-cost-new method. Had this rule been applied in the early thirties, practically every electric utility in the land would have been bankrupt—or at least I have been so informed by those who should know. When a city votes to take over a service utility whose franchise has expired, the conference method of fixing the price to be paid is the only one available. Dr. Morgan calls this "confiscation." On the contrary, it is the only way by which duplication of facilities can be avoided.

In determining the price to be paid in the purchase of a privately owned municipal electric system, proponents of the public interests are handicapped by the universal private-company practice of refinancing all bond issues, in contrast with the all but universal practice of public authorities in amortizing and paying off their utility borrowings in periods averaging perhaps twenty-five years. Operating under a twenty-to-thirty-year franchise, a private company ought reasonably to be expected to write off at least a substantial portion of its investment during the life of the franchise. Then there would be a minimum of trouble in reaching an agreement as to the price to be paid for the used and useful private-company property in case the citizens decided to own their own plant. In spite of the gen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eral practice of arriving at the end of the franchise period with inflated values, there are on the record almost no cases of actual "duplication of facilities," and "confiscation" is impossible under our Constitution! The TVA Board has over and over again given these assurances, but Messrs. Groesbeck and Wilkie and Dr. Morgan, like Rachael, refuse to be comforted.

Dr. Morgan deprecates "hidden subsidies" to public power projects such as he alleged were involved in the widely publicized rates charged by the publicly owned plant in Tupelo, Mississippi, which after an exhaustive investigation were recently approved by the Federal Power Commission. He always compliments state utility commissions "which pass on power rates and quality of services rendered, regulate the issuance of securities and often supervise capital expenditures." Were these commissions just dozing during the late twenties?

In one place Dr. Morgan suggests that "power sold by the TVA to the private utilities be resold by them at rates agreed to by the government." He then answers this suggestion by saying that "the utilities might prefer to generate their own power at a slightly higher cost, rather than submit to this increased degree of regulation." Are you telling me? Many of Dr. Morgan's writings about utilities come out in just this fashion. He sets up an ideal line of action for this best of all possible worlds and then proves it won't work either because private-company officials are less enlightened than they should be or because of "self-seeking persons in public life." As a matter of fact, unless our Public Service Commissions are to be superseded, no federal agency would have the constitutional right to regulate intrastate rates in this manner.

Dr. Morgan's articles have become increasingly bitter in their comments on what he takes to be the attitude of the proponents of public power generally, and particularly as to what he takes to be the policies of the TVA Board, of which he admits he is a minority member. Dr. Morgan, by the original TVA set-up, was allocated duties other than power. From the start he has had very little to do with the formulation of TVA power policies. In resisting the demand of Commonwealth and Southern to have all TVA-generated power turned over to it, in meeting all private-company litigation man-fashion, in cooperating especially with some of the larger cities of the Valley in obtaining their own service with its lower rates, in coöperating with the REA in pushing rural electrification and in its power policy generally, the majority members of the TVA Board have the full confidence of the public-power group.

No one should quarrel with Dr. Morgan if he is insistent on expressing his own views. In these days, even strong convictions forcibly expressed should be at a premium. But there should be strenuous objection to anyone remaining in office and opposing national policy after that policy has been approved by the ballot, voted by the Congress, stated and restated by the President and affirmed and reaffirmed by the TVA Board. To permit of leadership opposing such instructions is the negation of the democratic process. In all fairness to Dr. Morgan it should be stressed that his record shows that he has never been on the public side in any line-up on power. He is not naïve. He simply sees public power problems through the eyes of the private interests. His views are the views on power quite generally held only two or three decades ago.

Dr. Morgan's questioning of the acts and motives of his fellow board members, as he has recently done in the public prints, adds immeasurably to the difficulties of settlement of the issues between the TVA and the private companies. Instead of promoting adjustment he gives heart to the enemies of the project. For this reason his remaining as chairman of the TVA Board simply postpones the day when there can be wholesome and proper adjustment between the paramount public power interests in the Valley and the private interests which feel aggrieved and express it in litigation *ad nauseam* and propaganda galore.

In the controversy between public and private power as it affects wider areas than urban centers such as Knoxville and Memphis, Portland and Seattle, there is of course one important point affecting the generation of power we should have in mind, especially as we get into our upstream-water and soil-conservation campaign. It has been well expressed by Horace M. Gray (The American Economic Review, May, 1935):

> It is obvious that single-purpose, privately owned, hydro-electric plants, which must recover all costs from the sale of electricity alone, cannot compete with these multiple-purpose, publicly owned plants when the latter are operated on the "by-product" principle. In these areas, therefore, where the combination of water resources, topography, population and industry is propitious for such development, private companies will eventually be displaced by this new and superior type of institution. It is not, as the proponents of private ownership would have the public believe, an issue of government "subsidy" or "unfair competition." Rather it is the displacement of an institution by another which is economically and socially superior.

As I heard the President speak recently at Bonneville and noted the very great progress toward public power made in the last four years, I realized once again that it has not been barren battling, and that perhaps we may be at the moment storming the last gates of the citadel of private-power privilege. Certain it is that I recognize in the background of each of these eddies the same private-utility techniques and influences which have always been in evidence since my first contacts twenty-five years ago with the problems of public power.

A quotation from William Lloyd Garrison on his monument in Boston's Public Gardens reads, "Whether in laurels or in chains Liberty knows only victories." This same assurance may be given as to Public Power—all eddies to the contrary notwithstanding.

MORRIS L. COOKE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Committees

THERE was a little village lost in the rolling hills of Madrid Province. Communications were bad and news arrived rarely from the outside world. So it happened that it was far on into August before they heard of the rebellion and the revolution.

It was a very neutral village. Delegates came from Madrid to explain how to organize the Village Committee, the Defense Committee, the Patrols Committee and all the other committees thought necessary in those days. As it was a very neutral village, the villagers were quite willing to accept the new state of things and promised to organize themselves as the Militias desired, provided only that they were left to themselves to do it in their own way. The delegates returned to Madrid, and nothing more was heard of the village. No one bothered about it. No one worried the village which wished to make its own little independent revolution.

Came the grim days of early November, and Franco's troops were beating their way towards Madrid. In Madrid, the unions were drawing up the plan of the revolution, and one of their decisions was to give the land to the peasants.

The unions, therefore, summoned the villages to Madrid, and among them the lost village which wanted to be neutral, neither Red nor White, and had not given a sign of life in three months of civil war.

It seemed that this village had made its revolution so well, so perfectly, that it needed no advice, nor even to let the unions know what it had done.

The Village Committee did its best to avoid coming to Madrid and meeting the Peasants' Committee there to tell it how things were. At last, there was no help for it, and the delegates arrived.

"You're from that village?" asked the Madrid Committee.

"Oh, yes."

"Well, we've summoned you to tell you that we decided that you are to divide up the land in your parish among the peasants."

There was an uncomfortable pause. The village delegates looked at each other. The Madrid Committee was surprised.

"You understand?"

"Yes, comrade, yes."

"You mean you understand that we have decided to share out the land, and you've got to divide up the land in your parish?"

"Yes, comrades, yes," said the delegates, more confused than ever.

The Madrid men could not understand this strange lack of enthusiasm. All the other villages' delegates had thanked them heartily.

"Is there any reason why you should not divide the land?" they asked, puzzled.

"Well, you see, as for reasons. . . ."

"Why, is it divided up already? If so, all the better."

"No . . . or at least . . . well, you see. . . ."

"What's the matter? Let's have it."

The villagers shuffled, nudged one another, tried to hide behind one another. At last the most resolute of them spoke up.

"Well, you see, we don't really like to suggest it to the Village Committee."

"And why not?"

"Well, you see, they won't want to do it."

"They won't do it? What sort of committee is this that won't carry out a decree so revolutionary, so favorable to the peasants?"

"Well, you see, the Committee. . . . Well, the Committee. . . . Well, as a matter of fact, the Committee are the landowners. . . ."

"The landowners! Who the devil elected the Committee?"

"Well, we did."

"Why on earth did you elect a committee of landowners? Why not a committee of real peasants, people like ourselves?"

"Well, it was like this, comrade. . . . You see, when we were electing the Committee, Franco's troops were only five miles from our village. And as a Militiaman had told us, one of the lads from round our way, that the first people the Fascists shot were those on the Committee, well, we elected all the rich men. . . ."

The good ship "Orondo" was sailing in the Caribbean on July 19. She was a very ancient ship with a very scratch crew, and she had no radio. She tramped the West Indies for a couple of months more, then turned homeward, bound for Vigo.

The first thing that happened when she arrived in Vigo was that a crowd of armed men in khaki-and-blue swarmed aboard. "Are you with us?" they asked.

"Certainly," replied the crew. "Who are you?"

"Arriba España!" shouted the armed men. As this did not seem to make sense, the crew remained silent.

"You lied! You are not with us!" said the armed men. "Who are your committee?"

"What committee? We haven't got a committee. We never had a committee."

"You can't lie to us twice. We know you have a committee."

The crew discussed this, but it still did not make sense. Despite the armed men—they learned that they were called Falangists, whatever that might be—they could not see why they should have a committee. They were ordinary Galician seamen and had no need of committees.

"All right," said the leader of the armed men, "if you refuse to tell us who are the committee, there is only one thing to do with you Red swine. We'll elect one for you."

Although the seamen did not like being called Red swine, they decided that this was the best solution. These men seemed to know all about committees and they were obviously best fitted to elect one.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Falangists chose eight men at random, the most resolute and seamanlike of the crew. The others were allowed to go about their business, unload their cargo and go ashore. The Falangists took the committee with them.

That night, two of the crew met the committee near the graveyard. Armed men surrounded them, and they seemed haggard. Soon after, shots were heard.

Next day, the Vigo papers spoke highly of the capture of a Red ship off Bilbao. They mentioned that the ship's committee had met the fate reserved by the gallant Falangists for all such Red swine.

MARC FRANK.

How to Look at Dancing

ATTIRED in a white satin bathing suit with a long strip of red cotton hanging from the waist to the floor, one purple glove on the left hand and two acute angles of spangled material stitched onto the satin, the modernistic dancer stands for five minutes on one leg while she dislocates her hip and performs a number of abrupt, unrelated contortions with her arms, accented by an occasional twitch of the head and accompanied offstage by wooden knockers, a steam calliope and the faint piping of a nasal flute.

Being still undeterred in our desire to comprehend the new dance, we attend another recital the following week. The dance is called simply "Flowers," and, with infatuated eyes, the interpretive dancer unfurls a chiffon drapery, billows and yearns, is swayed by a gentle breeze and drinks the gentle rain-patter. Her bud opens, her petals spread and she gives us her inviolate Self.

After two such experiences, 10 percent of the spectators renounce the dance forever, unfortunately never having seen a modern dance performance. At least 80 percent return to this undisturbing art of the flowers, and only 10 percent, if that many, have sufficient inquisitiveness and endurance to keep on until they find the modern dance, which is neither of these two extremes.

The two extremes, which in other arts may be called academic and ultra-modern, are not really art forms at all. The innocuous flower episode places the spectator as an inert object at the ebb of receptivity. The projected "experience" remains well within the bounds of his remembered experience and stirs him only to a vague nostalgia somewhat in the manner of a college reunion. The satin episode does not place the spectator in any light because it has no possible contact with him.

If, in a very elementary fashion, we conceive this approach to creation as lying along a road, we find at the foot of the mountain a comfortable little village where there are only already known things acting invariably in a known way. The Artist of the Flowers repeats these commonplaces in their accepted pattern but never dares ascend the path that leads up into the mountain. At the crest of the mountain there lies an utter void. The Artist of the Satin has leaped from the village to this vacuity and lost herself in ether. The point is that all ventures away from the village, however daring they may be, must keep the village constantly in mind.

It is this task which the modern dance has set for itself and which has raised it from the common level of entertainment to that of an art. There is a natural resistance in man to anything that pretends to disturb his *status quo,* for which reason he asks, "What is this upstart art; what Minerva-like body born, with a shriek, clothed and full-armed; what fiend that rends the veils of Isadora's followers; what angular, disjointed ugly duckling sprung from the swan of Pavlova?"

To place it in historical sequence and show that it is the logical successor to the ballet and the joining link to the primitive ritual and Greek drama is beyond the scope of this essay. I am concerned with telling you in what frame of mind and in what physical disposition of the body you should approach it.

That some such direction is required may be evidenced by the growth of the modern dance form within the past ten years. The top-notchers, starting from scratch, now average some thirty-five concerts and lecture-demonstrations a year over an area bounded by Maine, Florida, California and Washington. In addition to teaching in their own studios, they also teach in such colleges as Bennington, Sarah Lawrence, Columbia, New York University, Mills, Temple University and Bryn Mawr. Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman drew capacity houses in the Hippodrome in New York and in Chicago; Martha Graham did the same in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco; Hanya Holm established what may be a record during a week's performances in Denver. Modern dancers of second and third rank, less insistent on perfection, less encumbered with large groups and more willing to repeat old programs, have a concert average much higher than this. Centers of more than local importance have been established in Bennington, Vermont, Greeley, Colorado, Cleveland and Los Angeles, among other places. Specialized magazines on the subject, of which there are three, have an approximate circulation of 6,000, chiefly in schools and libraries. No Physical Education Conference from here to California is complete without extended treatment of modern dance and in a growing number of progressive colleges training in modern dance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can be offered by the candidate seeking a degree.

It is essential to bear in mind, first, that the modern dancer is projecting his experience through movement. This sounds like a truism, but if you recall your response to previous recitals you will probably find that it has been to every conceivable element but movement, or, if it has been to movement, it has been only to its most spectacular aspects. This is largely due to the fact that, up to the emergence of the modern form, the dance had been occupied with illustrating a narrative or acting as a frivolous weak-sister to music. The major forms, up to the development of the modern technique, were Music-Visualization, where every dancer enacted the role of a musical instrument and moved the arms up with the high notes and down with the low ones; Music-Interpretation, where the dancer cried, "This is how it makes me feel," and nobody much cared; Nature Dance, where the dancer too obviously aped flowers, breezes, lilies and sea gulls; and Ballet, where the dancer interlarded purely spectacular acrobatic movement with straight pantomime to relate a well known romantic tale, usually about a princess who was as fragile as an eggshell and inclined to swoon (the sum total of woman's status in the nineteenth century).

The last performed physical feats and produced a musical titillation, but carried no overtones of meaning in its movement and generated no emotional response except in emotionally sloppy people. Its purpose was purely "to do," and on many occasions it "did" brilliantly. The purpose of the remaining three was "to give," with all the nauseating implications of that misplaced humanitarianism. It seems to me that the deeper purpose of art is to stir the spectator out of his lethargy by reshuffling the cards he has been complacently holding and enlarge his experience through forcing him to recognize and accept the new hand that has been dealt. To do this, the dancer was obliged to recognize movement as his medium, movement as the substance of the dance, and to use it directly according to its inherent laws, not according to the laws of music or of fiction.

You are quite willing to grant that the colored illustrations in a book do not belong in the same category as a Rembrandt or a Cézanne, yet you will set up a howl of protest when the dance refuses to remain a delicate, charming illustration. In so doing you are not bewailing a monstrosity loosed upon the land but merely acknowledging a deficiency in your sense organs. The picture reported by your eyes is valueless unless it produces a response, which, you may have forgotten, is a potential motor response.

Five senses are commonly acknowledged but a sixth one is commonly forgotten or denied. That sixth one is called kinesthesia, or movement-perception, and, added to the other five, invariably produces a kinesthetic response. It has no conveniently discernible center such as the eye or ear, but is located throughout your muscles and joints. It may produce a response purely of itself without assistance from any of the other five senses, as, if I may repeat the illustration used by John Martin in his book "America Dancing," when you find yourself suddenly upside-down. It is not necessary to see, touch, hear, smell or taste yourself in order to be convinced that things are not as they should be and that you should promptly turn yourself right side up.

The kinesthetic sense also forms a circuit with our other senses and produces a kinesthetic response. Our eyes report an onrush of water, the circuit is established and we flee. The majority of our responses are of this self-preservatory nature. In a strictly imitative or contagious sense, our eyes report a yawn, the circuit is established, and we likewise yawn.

All of these types of response occur in a less violent degree when we attend the theatre or look at paintings. To enjoy a dance fully one must experience vicariously the movements which the dancer makes and, to some degree, everyone does this. If a difficult split is performed, one feels a muscular strain in the thigh. If a dancer makes a spectacular fall, one experiences that fall even to the point of responding with an audible expulsion of breath. But the dance is not always spectacular. Lesser degrees of unbalance are used, less violent extensions are made, and here, where one is not *forced* into kinesthetic response, one may block that response by extraneous conditions, as social etiquette has taught us to block the yawn even if it strangles us. In other words, we short-circuit. In viewing the dance we can make no motor response without the communication of the image through our sense of sight, and this image, on entering the eye, may be deflected, which deflection is caused by a preconception or mind-set. If you go chiefly with your ears open, you will hear the music but you will see the dance only as it corresponds identically with the music.

The modern dancer works in movements constructed on physical rhythms and built into phrases and themes, varied in accent, shifted in space, repeated or discarded. He is not telling you a story from which you could get as adequate a response through reading; he is abstracting, distorting and emphasizing known motor patterns, so that his assemblage and presentation of them in their new pattern will give you a new perception, enlarge your vision, refocus your eye. You should participate in the dance vicariously, move inwardly as the dancer moves, feel the strain and the elevation; and you can do so once you accept the fact that the dancer is speaking to you through movement, not words. Through this vicarious motor experience you will come to perceive the reason for the movements, the logical succession, their rhythm, and eventually the structure of the dance: where this phrase was repeated identically and where with variations, where a horizontal line predominated and where it was broken with a vertical, where and for what reason one section of the dance is confined to leg movement and another uses the arms exclusively. You sense these things, as you sense an obstacle in the dark or as you sense an impending catastrophe. When you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can write a dance down in black and white, it has become part of your common knowledge and is no longer material for art.

The very realization that you have a muscle sense is often sufficient to break down the barriers which have been impeding its function, but there is one other impediment which should be mentioned, and that is the eye itself. The degree of kinesthetic response is largely conditioned by the degree of receptivity of the eye. Except as a means of preventing us from bumping into things, falling off things or being struck by things, the eye is a poorly trained organ. If you doubt that it has progressed so little as a recording apparatus, choose one of your most cherished possessions and attempt to describe it as accurately as possible without looking at it. Then look at it, check your results, and be amazed that the shape, form, color and material of this bibelot, whose loss would pain you deeply, have scarcely entered your consciousness. Be prepared, then, to receive little more than a blur of color and motion in your first dance recitals, but be prepared also to exercise and concentrate your eye so that somewhat more than one-tenth of the image may squeeze through your restricted iris.

Your awareness of a kinesthetic sense and the openness of your eye are the only two absolute requisites. When they are in working order you should sense the grim power of Martha Graham's walk across the stage in "Act of Piety" and the downright silliness of the Prince's lovelorn, Delsartean farewell to the Swan Princess in "Swan Lake."

PAUL LOVE.

A Rebuke to Fascism

FOR THE second time this year a small European state has rebuked fascism and encouraged the continuance of democratic, constitutional government. The Netherlands have imitated the recent spectacular defeat of M. Degrelle, the fascist leader in Belgium, by voting down the National Socialist candidates for membership in the Dutch Parliament.

It had been feared that the great proportion of unemployment in the Dutch working classes together with the severe deflationary measures taken by the administration there would react favorably for the extremist candidates who were soliciting votes on a platform containing the usual fascist panaceas for all economic ills. Herr A. A. Mussert, several years ago an unknown engineering employee of the government, led the National Socialist campaign on funds and slogans contributed by Germany.

Herr Mussert was without the demagogic oratorical ability of a Hitler, but he traveled extensively throughout the country preaching the abolition of the Parliament and the suppression of constitutional guarantees. He argued that the leadership of the strong man was necessary before the Dutch could emerge from the industrial depression, and of course he claimed to be the strong man.

National Socialism was first organized as a political party in 1933, but it was not until the provincial elections held in 1935 that an opportunity was given to test its strength. Then, the worst fears of liberals were confirmed when Herr Mussert's group drew eight percent of the total vote cast and, as a result, placed two members in the upper chamber of the Dutch Parliament. The members of this house are elected by the provincial legislatures.

The spectacular rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany was recalled and the fact that Herr Hitler drew even a smaller proportion of the vote when he first offered his movement to the German electorate. But those observers who feared for the future did not take into consideration the long democratic heritage which the Dutch have but the Germans lack.

At any rate, Herr Mussert was wrong when he assured his followers that this year their fascist movement would obtain twenty-four seats out of the total of a hundred in the directly elected lower chamber of the Parliament. He did obtain four seats, but his proportion of the national poll dropped from the eight percent of 1935 to a bit less than four percent. While 294,500 Dutch voted fascist in 1935, this year only 171,000 voted for dictatorship and an authoritarian government.

Three principal reasons may be cited for this setback to totalitarianism in the Netherlands. The first is inherent in the nature of fascism, which to the liberty-loving Dutch is an alien and unwanted system. Second, Mussert never successfully denied liberal accusations that his movement was inspired and financed from Berlin. The business-minded Dutch believed that when National Socialism took power in their country, Germany would undertake to collect on her investment. Finally, the psychological effect of Léon Degrelle's defeat in neighboring Belgium lost many votes to the Dutch National Socialists.

These periodic reverses for the Führer principle can only have a salutary effect. They indicate a tightening of democratic ranks and hint that, perhaps, the tide of totalitarianism has risen as high as it ever will and that, necessarily, a low tide follows a high one.

LEONARD J. SWEITZER.

Sheep toward Bedding

Now all of them gray-cluster behind a belled sheep
They are content to follow: their eyes are pasture-dull
And the smell of sun shades from their wool.
Now all of them flock down the burnt-out close
Of day, through slow heat. They come back
From wild sunflowers hard-grown in split rimrock,
From thin dry-headed grass and tumbleweed. They dusty-track
Down road to bed themselves in orchard.
They flock
Close, and mill. Weary as work teams, or homing crows
Or summer in earth, they lie down in the gray stillness to sleep.

CONRAD PENDLETON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shoot the Works

Mr. B. Goes to the Play—"Julius Caesar" Socko, "Star Wagon" Wobbly—Ancient Rome Realler Than Gay Nineties

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE has been honored by many distinguished critics down the ages, but I hope his attention will be called to a recent summation of his present standing which appeared in Variety. This weekly is the Broadway Bible and its estimate of the Bard's current box-office appeal was expressed in the following headline, "Shakespeare B'way's In-'n'-Outer; 'Caesar' Clicks, 'Cleo,' 'Like' Fold." For those who are unfamiliar with the code it may be explained that neither "As You Like It" nor "Antony and Cleopatra" were successful this season, but that "Julius Caesar" is set as a sensational success.

It is pretty generally agreed that Shakespeare has managed to be rather more timely and topical in "Julius Caesar" than George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart in "I'd Rather Be Right." But certain advantages lay with the Bard. Human progress has a habit of weaving around in circles. Every century or so it returns to the starting field or some flat area very similar in appearance. "I'd Rather Be Right" concerns the doings in Washington today and particularly those of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With all proper respect for the President, it must be admitted that in his function as football quarterback he is an elusive runner. He can dodge and squirm out of the arms of a tackler. And so when Kaufman and Hart dive at him on the midfield stripe they are apt at times to fall upon their respective faces, since the quarry is already in the end zone. And to make it still more difficult, the President sometimes runs toward his own goal line and again in the direction of the enemy's.

But if Shakespeare seems closer to the news than Kaufman and Hart he also anticipated the fundamental theme on which Maxwell Anderson has built his new play, "The Star Wagon." Immediately after the assassination of Caesar, Cassius says to Brutus, "How many ages hence shall this our lofty scene be acted over in states unborn and accents yet unknown?" Cassius has proved an excellent prophet not only in regard to the modern duplication of events in Rome but also as to the enduring quality of Shakespeare's chronicle. And the theme of "The Star Wagon" is the not unfamiliar notion that time in reality is a procession. One may view the first or last ranks of the parade or watch from the reviewing stand, but still the future and the past march along together. Thus from a high tower or an airplane the spectator might see present, past and future woven into one and the same pattern. And since the line of march is circular rather than a straight line, the patient onlooker need only bide his time to see again those battalions which passed him by before.

A young man named Orson Welles, who got his training in the Federal Theatre, is the producer of "Julius Caesar" and also takes the part of Brutus. The play has been shortened and runs a little less than two hours, there being no intermission, but no changes have been made in text. The only liberty is in the costuming. There are no togas this time in Shakespeare's Rome. That is just as well, for actors do not wear such robes gracefully, and in the past I have seen whole scenes ruined by a Casca or a Cinna who tripped over the hem of his garment. Indeed Shakespeare himself set a precedent for modernization, since his Roman mob speaks distinctly in the manner of the Elizabethans.

All that Welles has done is to clothe Julius Caesar in a Sam Browne belt and a dark green uniform which makes the emperor look decidedly like Mussolini. But when the character speaks the lines assigned to him by Shakespeare it becomes evident that the parallel goes much deeper than the mere fact of modern clothes. Brutus wears a formal kind of mufti. His garb is not unlike that which young Bob La Follette might wear for an afternoon wedding in Madison, Wisconsin. And indeed the Bard seems to have had an extraordinary premonition of the unhappy fate of the liberal in a world torn by the strife between the extreme left and the right. It can hardly be said that Shakespeare sneers at Brutus, but the logic of events is punishing to the man who insists upon fighting fire with a bucket brigade.

Cassius who was held up to us in school as a scheming villain now seems to me the only man among the conspirators who stands out as realistic in his point of view. Brutus agrees, although reluctantly, to the plan to strike down Caesar, but he will not consent to let Mark Antony be listed among the victims. Indeed he cries out with all the idealism of the sincere liberal, "O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit, and not dismember Caesar!"

Again it can hardly be maintained that Brutus did much good to his own side when he insisted that Mark Antony should have leave to speak a funeral oration. "I like it not," objected the practical Cassius, but Brutus as an uncompromising devotee of free speech had his way, and his cause and that of his associates went down to destruction. Shakespeare has written so timely and provocative a piece that the critics were actually arguing whether he favored fascism or communism or was perhaps a Trotskyite.

No scenery is used in the Welles presentation of "Julius Caesar." The tragedy is played upon a platform stage against the bare walls of the theatre and the intervals are indicted by raising or dimming the lights. The fact that I could see the steam pipes most visibly did not drag me away from ancient Rome. Nor was I disturbed to note at the edge of the mob in one scene the stalwart figure of the theatre's fireman, who had no place to hide. Indeed to me his presence was appropriate. After all Rome did burn and this is a play and a performance that has caught the crackle.

"The Star Wagon" does not belong among the more distinguished works of Maxwell Anderson. It is, as has been said, one of the many plays which deal with the reshuffling of time. The man who thinks he married the wrong girl finds that if he had it to do all over again he would still make the same choice. Miss Lillian Gish gives a beautiful performance and there is some humor and sentiment in an excursion back to bicycle days. But I have my doubts whether there was ever an age in which folk were quite so self-consciously quaint and cute. Perhaps this marks one respect in which Shakespeare excels Mr. Anderson. The elder playwright went upon the notion that the ancient Romans had no lively notion that they were ancient Romans. The same thing should go for the Gay Nineties. Each age and generation feels sufficient unto itself and it is seldom of a mind merely to strike attitudes and pose for posterity.

HEYWOOD BROUN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

Our Complicated Japanese Policy—The CIO Tackles the Relief Problem—What Was Behind the Kennedy Appointment?

THE ADMINISTRATION'S Japanese policy is a great deal more complicated than it seems. The two official groups most closely concerned with its day-to-day development are the diplomats of the State Department and the navy admirals. Both groups appear to believe that the two powers with the greatest interests in the western Pacific are Japan and the USSR. The USSR must be always alert to guard its maritime province with its limitless hinterland. The United States and Great Britain have no such stake in the Far East. Permanent officials here consider talk of a possible war between America—single-handed—and Japan over an incident like the bombing of the "Panay" to be beyond the realm of possibility. According to expert opinion, a major war in the Orient would almost certainly involve the USSR, and probably England. In such a war, our part and that of England would be confined to lending the USSR naval and economic aid.

Such considerations form the background against which our Japanese policy is being evolved. In my opinion, the administration is pursuing three quite different objectives. Its immediate aim is "face." We wish to be treated with due respect by the Japanese military. Second, the administration insists on having its own independent line. It does not intend to be led around by Great Britain as we undoubtedly were during the Manchurian episode of 1931-32. But underneath these an observer feels that the professional bureaucrats are steadily pursuing the long-term course of balance-of-power politics. There is no way to prove it, but I doubt that they wish to see Japan so weakened that the USSR becomes the predominant nation of Asia. They are largely blind to the ideals of the USSR; they think of it primarily as a military power. Just now they are vastly exercised over the conduct of Japan's aviators, but I think they would be still more upset if Japan's military machine gave evidence of cracking.

The decision of the CIO and its secular arm, Labor's Non-Partisan League, to see to it that out-of-work CIO members obtain federal relief this winter is of great significance. In the last depression, labor unions did not do what they might have done. The A. F. of L. building-trades unions were an exception; they worked hard to obtain jobs and the prevailing wage scale for their members under the WPA program. The musicians' union likewise showed initiative. But—at least in the opinion of observers here—the A. F. of L. as a whole was singularly feeble.

Instructions have now gone out to all local units of Labor's Non-Partisan League to establish unemployment committees. Their first task will be to assist all jobless workers—not only CIO members but unorganized workers as well—in finding places on the WPA rolls. They are to help in the preparing of application forms, and to intervene when bureaucratic delays occur.

Meantime the national Non-Partisan League has set itself the job of obtaining new funds for the WPA from Congress. It intends first to ask for the repeal of the Woodrum amendment to the 1937 relief act, under which Mr. Hopkins is forbidden to spend more than one-twelfth of the WPA appropriation in any one month. This was the handiwork of Congressman Woodrum of Virginia, the budget bureau's dearest friend on the House Appropriations Committee. Its openly stated purpose was to forestall a later deficiency appropriation by compelling the WPA to hold its expenditures to a rigid level, about $100,000,000 a month, no matter what actual relief needs might develop.

The Non-Partisan League hopes that repeal can be obtained within the first few days of the regular session next month. It then proposes to demand a deficiency bill, for perhaps as much as $500,000,000. For the fiscal year beginning next June, it has tentatively decided to ask for $3,000,000,000. As long as Congress remains in its present temper, it is going to be a blood-sweating job to obtain either a deficiency bill or an adequate appropriation for 1938-39. But the prospect is by no means hopeless.

It will be noticed that the Non-Partisan League is undertaking approximately the same work that the Workers' Alliance has carried on for the last four years. Observers here are watching to see what coöperation can be arranged.

It would doubtless be unfair to say that Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy has been kicked into the ambassadorship to England. Apparently he is delighted with the job, which, in the queasy state of the world, is important as well as honorific. Nevertheless, his departure marks the end of a sharp intra-administration struggle, and with it the defeat of the business-minded group among Mr. Roosevelt's advisers. The Left champion in the contest turned out to be Secretary Morgenthau. You will recall that the special-session Congress met last month amid cries for modification or outright repeal of the undistributed-profits tax. Business leaders, like the emotionally overstuffed Mr. Winthrop W. Aldrich, called the tax a primary cause of the depression. All this seemingly raised Mr. Morgenthau's dander.

The Treasury has never pretended that the undistributed-profits tax was perfect in every detail, and has itself been ready to recommend minor changes. But—according to the story told by administration liberals—Mr. Morgenthau believes that the tax as a whole represents an immense step forward in national policy. He was sure that it had had little or nothing to do with bringing on the depression. More than that, he felt that the outcry against it was fundamentally insincere, that chiefly it was an exploratory raid on the outermost of the New Deal's trenches. If the administration gave ground it would not mean that business thereafter would coöperate with the administration. Much more probably, it would mean that business would open a general assault on the capital-gains tax, the National Labor Relations Act and the whole New Deal structure.

When the special session opened last month, there were widespread newspaper reports that Mr. Roosevelt was attempting to turn rightward. Lacking affiliations with Duke University, this department makes no claim to mind-reading, and does not know what Mr. Roosevelt's inner thoughts were. But it does know that Mr. Roosevelt spontaneously assured the liberals of the administration that no material compromises with business would be made. Apparently, however, he simultaneously permitted his more con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

servative associates, among them Mr. Kennedy, to gain exactly the contrary impression. Whatever happened, a number of Congressmen soon came to believe that Mr. Kennedy wanted the undistributed-profits tax modified, and that Mr. Roosevelt stood behind him. This came to Mr. Morgenthau's ears, and the intra-administration struggle broke in full force. A story that has had general currency in Washington tells of a stormy scene between Mr. Morgenthau and Mr. James Roosevelt, now his father's secretary and Mr. Kennedy's long-time friend. I cannot confirm the supposed details, but that it occurred is certain.

Mr. Morgenthau has now won in handsome fashion. Mr. Kennedy has been purged, and the administration is the better for it. For the moment, the White House group seems filled to an extraordinary degree with unity and loyalty. Unhappily, this does not mean that the New Deal is safe. The influence of business on the Democratic majority in Congress still seems strong, and the regular session of Congress may give the administration a rough time. But at least it will be able to fight back with spirit.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Has One Short Year Upset the Apple-Cart? —An Argument for a Censor—High Time for Administration Magic

JUST ABOUT a year ago an aviator took off, soared into the ether and disappeared. He has not been heard of since. It is not improbable that he still lives, lost in some jungle or on some unvisited island. When he left, the nation was preparing—just a short twelve months ago—to inaugurate Franklin Roosevelt for the second time. There were men who were saying that Roosevelt could remain President as long as he wished. The stock market was just at its recovery peak. Business rose and prepared for new flights. The Roosevelt-haters in Wall Street wondered if, after all, they hadn't been a little too hasty in their hate. The nation tuned up for a hysterical celebration of the Second Coming. Certain sapient columnists observed that the Republican Party was breathing its last. And this is what the unfortunate aviator heard as he prepared to hoist his plane into the blue.

Now suppose he were to be found and brought to Washington today. He would have to rub his eyes. I have been looking over that troubled and bewildered capital. The President's great majority is split, befogged, lumbering, rolling helplessly in stormy seas. It seems to be united on only one thing—the leadership of their unconquerable leader has collapsed. The recovery is gone. It is, indeed, incredible how swiftly it has vanished. If you follow the New York Times index of business activity, you know that business has gone down in four months a far greater distance than it sank from October, 1929, to July, 1931—twenty-one months. We are close to the level of Christmas, 1934, and only a few points above the level of Christmas, 1933. The whole mood of the country and the capital has changed. The spavined old Republican elephant is putting on flesh. And it is difficult to find a New Dealer who does not admit, privately at least, that the New Deal is all washed up. And in one short year.

Certain of the monastic orders have a rule under which abbots and rectors and provincials and other priestly superiors are supplied with personal censors. Some humble old monk or priest is assigned to the ecclesiastic who rules for the moment. His duty is to go to his superior and whisper softly an admonition whenever the little man seems to forget that he is just a plain monk after all and not a superman by virtue of his brief term as abbot. I know of an instance where a distinguished rector of a great Catholic college took to wearing a high hat and attending exclusive dinners. His gray-haired old monitor gently reminded him that the head under the hat was still a very fallible one and that the airs the great prexy was giving himself were not good for his soul. The reproofs were unheeded. Then a higher power thrust its arm into the college refectory one day quite unheralded and removed the vain prelate to a humble post in a small parish.

Maybe we ought to establish the post of censor. Perhaps there should be some group of elder keepers of the executive soul who, quite without other power, might go to him and remind him of the Fates. Maybe, like the Capuchins, he ought to be compelled to remove each day a shovelful of earth from his grave. It is not good for men to be lifted so high. It is not good for judges to wear robes or for kings to sit on thrones or for Presidents to be equipped with such vast majorities. A frank old casuist at his elbow last February might have saved him from the Supreme Court disaster. The President's last year seems to have been an uninterrupted series of political blunders—the Court fight, the Chicago speech, the special session, the drive for budget balancing, most of his appointments. There is little doubt that his judgment has been impaired. It is impossible to keep out of mind now, as it was a year ago, the memory of Wilson as he arrived in France and Wilson one year later. In a capital where every issue seems to be in an appalling state of indecision, only one issue seems to have been definitely settled. This is the issue of a third term for the President.

One of the odd phenomena in Washington is the persistent belief that somehow the President will pull another rabbit out of his hat. Passing the White House, the taxi driver who was discussing the depression with me said: "That guy in there is sure on the spot now. But you can't never tell what he'll do. He's liable to turn some trick any day now that'll get him out of this." I heard others, sophisticated observers, say the same thing. Thus a legend dies unwillingly. The first comment on the sinking of the "Panay" was that this was a stroke of Roosevelt luck. Even hard-boiled old Republican realists live under the spell of this terror—that Roosevelt will flash some spectacular trick which will exorcise, for the time being at least, all the depression devils. The men who seem to have the least hope of this are those who are still most devoted to the New Deal. They seem to know best into what disarray the machinery back of the sanctuary has fallen. They are indeed a blue crew.

But out of all this is emerging one certainty, that there must be a retreat from the budget-balancing strategy. One can hear the wheezing of the pulmotor as the administration labors to resuscitate its only rabbit—the deficit.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED.

Balanced in Light

Adventures in Light and Color, by Charles J. Connick, New York: Random House. 428 pages, illustrated. $12.50 trade edition; $25 limited edition.

MR. CONNICK in this steadily engaging book does not go in for the obscurantism common to stained-glass mythology, nor for gloomy individual refrains. We are not told of some blest centuries, mostly French, when men's faith was such that their crafts were so, and when the artless believers brought cheeses, pennies, gems, sausages, glass, sticks and stones for a cathedral, and, so we infer, the Virgin made it all stand up. We hear very little from Mr. Connick about secrets in glass that have vanished, or colors ground from jewels. If he is sad at all it is not that the stained-glass art is lost, which is nonsense, but that artiness has been found. Even that, what with opalescent or pictorial abuses, troubles him very little. This great art, built in luminous color and balanced in light, calculated to the day's moods and pieties, has so much reality for him that he never doubts its position or our interest. He would woo us by many varied approaches to the subject, he spreads all his tail feathers to hold our eyes and enslave our minds.

The range in method, tone and knowledge in Mr. Connick's volume is astonishing. It was written not so much for professional as for lay readers, especially those who travel both within themselves and abroad. All is generously contrived; parts of the account are scholarly, other parts are like easy lectures or conversation, others glittering with facts merely delightful to pick up along the way. There are also kindly pages of purely technical information, a friendly bibliography, and a sort of running tour for "a glassman's holiday" in the European countries —even Torcello and its eleventh-century glass mosaics, and Barcelona's, not the Cathedral but Santa Maria del Mar, are remembered—and at length a file of the glass in America that is to be noted. Finally there are forty-two color plates, some of them excellent, from paintings, photographs and Lumières; forty-eight collotype plates; and many drawings and charts.

Meanwhile underneath the whole of the account there is a sense of some beautiful and ultimate necessity where human expression is concerned, an open enthusiasm capable of witty and ironic self-defense, and a kind of spiritual brightness that shows how much of the life pouring down from those high windows may remain in their student and lover. For all this last we are prepared by a quotation, early in the book—that saying of the Abbé Suger, "the Father of France," Regent of France during the first crusade, friend of Abélard, but also, as the glassman knows him, "devoted soul who loved the beauty of God's house": "Our poor spirit is so weak that it is only through the use of materials that it can rise to the truth."

Speaking of the remarkable color reproduction of the Lumière plate of a detail from the (West) Passion Window, Chartres, Mr. Connick notes the limitations common to all photographs of stained glass. It is almost static, and the marvelous orange-reds that border the Cross have gone dull. But, he says, "the suggestion of limpid clarity in the blue that silhouettes the Cross is eloquent of the glassiness of glass." And if your imagination is alive enough, you may see even here the composition, alive in light, flowing toward you through it, you may get the superb quality of significant design in those figures. He records too those inevitable comments that we have all heard, among them the regrets for the lack of drawing in the medieval artists of such windows as those at Chartres; plus the answer that might be found in Mr. Roger Fry:

> Here the simplification of the forms is the result of an instinctive reaching out for the direct symbol of the idea. . . . The essential power of pictorial, as of all other art, lies in its use of the fundamental and universal symbol, and whoever has the instinct for this can convey his ideas, though possessed of the most rudimentary knowledge of the actual forms of nature; while he who has it not, can by no accumulation of observed facts add anything to the spiritual treasure of mankind.

I fancy we are all sensitive to stained glass, as something with the nearness and power of music; or with the reminder and shock of our first prayers, raptures, sublimations, despair, as the case may be; or with the rage and violation of traditions, emotions, old associations, that stir us largely as, practically speaking, the social soul's *impedimenta.* At any rate this stretch of hours reading Mr. Connick, who is moreover an artist in his own right so far as stained glass goes, leads me to make a comment which I suppose everyone has felt about Mr. Peter Blume's picture, "The Eternal City," at the Julien Levy Galleries—among galleries that notable success in freshness and point. Here is a picture that might be thought to have an attacking idea. Rome is here, the eternal city, touched with its immortal return, marbles and breathless reliquaries, in recollection majestic and in poems golden. We note the Italian scene, Fascist soldiers obeying Fascist orders—it would seem grievingly; a shrine where superstition and ardor are hotly commingled; tender olive trees, gentle hillsides, roofs and orchards, leaves observed and set down with a precision and delicate abundance that argue a rich talent. In the midst of all that detail, majestic, historical, archeological, *commedia,* human and homely, we see the head of Mussolini, a jack-in-the-box, papier-mâché, green, very likely ridiculous. As a matter of fact the green in that Jack is so delicious, the painting everywhere so beguiling, that nothing but pleasure arises. Mussolini, or no Mussolini, according to the individual and to the news items that the British choose to serve us, we feel no indignation in the face of this heavenly glazing and color. The principle behind this effort in the stained glass that Mr. Connick sings is nothing if not clear. The craftsman must take his place within the whole production. Thinking of that, and of the direct narration of a painting like Maurice Sterne's "Anticoli," in the Lewisohn collection, the landscape with the road winding up the hill and the homely, poignant progress there created like a parable, I am obliged to remind Mr. Blume that he may as well decide. Throw away some of that relish of craft perfection and give all to the sharp version of his anti-Fascist attack, or—highest of all achievements—force his style to an expression, in painting terms, of his mood, or else with this brilliant facility and endless pains render the sweep, fragment and speciality of his vivid observation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As to the story of glass itself we had better not let Mr. Connick get us on to that. These seductions, as it were, of the material are heady matters, not to be rashly entertained. They are in a sense visiting gods, or might be. In the text and in the admirable Appendix, Mr. Connick will give you matters that absorb and bind you. No wonder Pliny called glass "the most lucrative trade ever invented by the mind of man." Swing your partners, hail Mary, and hail light. STARK YOUNG.

The Bandwagon

There are 2,600,000 communists in this country—"twice as many as in Russia"—who are threatening democracy as a form of government, Colonel Williams said. He accused them of being responsible for the repeal of the national prohibition amendment, passage of the amendment allowing women to vote and of trying to obtain passage of the child-labor amendment. . . . If we had a communistic Congress we couldn't even ask our own child to get a pail of water.—*Colonel R. A. Williams, quoted in The Miami, Fla., Herald.*

Two young girls from the diet kitchen of the Women's Hospital had the thrill of their lives Tuesday noon. In blue cotton frocks and white aprons they appeared in the hall outside the dining room and peered through the glass partition. They were rewarded by a glimpse of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford.—*From a news item in The Detroit News.*

Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, who is also state Democratic leader, issued a statement tonight charging that the various moves in the contest of the election of United States Senator A. Harry Moore as Governor had the "sinister object" of bringing about the installation of voting machines in all counties of the state.—*Dispatch from Jersey City, N. J., to The New York Times.*

JUST LIKE LIFE INSURANCE

It even makes it financially alluring for the family survivors of the victim for the lynching to occur.—*From an editorial on the anti-lynching bill, in The Atlanta, Ga., Constitution.*

CHEAPER TO STAY OUT ALL NIGHT

Lest she forget her house key, this amusing gift-gadget has been ingeniously designed to hold a key, a quarter, a lipstick, and rouge. . . . Prices range from $210 to $500.—*An advertisement by Cartier in The New Yorker.*

THAT OLD FEELING

Boake Carter on the Columbia network achieves something worth while in advertising. The listener does not know when he is news reporting and when he is plugging his product, with such nice feeling does he work.—*From "Gateway to Radio," by Gladys Shaw Erskine.*

IF YOU THINK THAT'S PEACE, YOU'RE CRAZY

Glands Held Key to Peace in World—Professor C. R. Stockard Discusses Chemical Substance That Changes Hatred to Love.—*Headline in The New York Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

Judging the USSR

SIR: The essence of Mr. Josephson's criticism of "Assignment in Utopia" [The New Republic, December 1] is that I went to Russia expecting "something resembling a millennium" and turned sour when the expectation proved preposterous. The book was therefore "born in error." This fantastic oversimplification, which he stretches to cover also Victor Serge, André Gide and Max Eastman, stands as proof that his entire essay was born in error. Whether his misreading of the books is self-delusion or delusion of your readers makes little difference.

Despite the title of my book, I did not look for Utopia in the sense Mr. Josephson uses the word. I had been too close to Russia for a decade for such absurd expectations. I did expect that workers would have a real measure of control over their own lives and jobs; that the Soviet regime would be moving toward and not retreating from socialism; that dissident communists would not be allowed to die of hunger as "punishment" for their passive resistance to forcible methods, etc. But I submit that these were not "Utopian" expectations.

One is not insisting on the millennium, surely, in rejecting pitiless exploitation of workers by the state; or the reign of terror against Old Bolsheviks, revolutionary intellectuals, millionfold categories of poor and middle peasants; or the new Russian chauvinism; or the fortification of new privileged classes; or the system of forced labor.

The simple fact is that like others with a large emotional stake in the Russian Revolution, I was so eager to believe and to bolster up my faith that very little would have sufficed. I held on to that faith on the slimmest evidence, until I was overwhelmed by the cumulative and inescapable proofs that Stalin's prison-state is utterly reactionary, inhuman and an insult to the very name of socialism.

In basing his entire criticism of my own and other books on his false assumption that we sought a millennium—instead of a modest minimum of reality—Mr. Josephson succeeds only in confusing his readers. And in long and assiduous reading of official apologetics I have not met a more shocking example of moral bankruptcy than your reviewer's suggestion that "we would conceivably do much better to dissociate ourselves . . . from the present system of justice" in Russia. As though any major phase of a country's life could be eliminated to spare your own sensibilities! As though Stalin had a peculiar mystical authority to slaughter his comrades, starve his peasants, populate vast forced-labor camps and devitalize his party!

The central fact about the administration of justice in Russia is that it is the quintessential expression of the mood and method of the regime. The same easy illogic might be applied by Mr. Josephson to any other phase of life that goes against his grain. Let's dissociate ourselves from Soviet justice, the internal passport system, the stretch-out system, the suppression of functioning trade unionism, the farcical "free elections"—from everything, indeed, except the name USSR and Stalin's monopoly of the socialist idea. And first of all, of course, let's dissociate ourselves from books that disturb our somnolent faith by misreading them and misstating them in reviews.

Mr. Josephson is egregiously in error in asserting that in 1932 American intellectuals were "misinformed" about Soviet blunders of that period. Not *mis*informed but *un*informed. The 1932 equivalents of today's Josephsons prevented knowledge from reaching their brethren by shouting down every unpleasant truth and fulminating against every book or article that failed to support their smug version. Now that the facts have come out despite the conspiracy of silence, the Josephsons want to gloss over what happened as past history, and to dissociate themselves from what is now happening. Such moral and mental acrobatics are simply obscene. One understands the tragedy of earnest convictions being battered down by unavoidable realities. But when intellectuals proceed to stick their heads ostrichlike into the sands of their despair, they merit only contempt tinctured with pity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Your reviewer descends to the pathetic level of The Daily Worker when he says that I had hoped "that there would be no roaches in Russia," and that my attention was focused on "political intrigue and gossip . . . above all on the engrossing problem of creature comfort in Russia." Even New Republic readers must be aware from discussions of the book appearing in practically every other periodical and newspaper that "Assignment in Utopia" dealt with the largest and most tragic events of the period it reports: collectivization, demonstration trials, famine, industrialization in practice, passportization, etc. Can he blot it all out by silly talk of roaches? Does he dare class the *valuta* tortures and prison camps and terrorism as "gossip"? Does he dare gibe at the desire of peasants to remain alive, of workers to feed their families, of communists to avoid execution, as an overemphasis on "creature comforts"?

Space limitations prevent me from going more deeply into the reviewer's panicky juggling of the contents of the books he discussed. His eager delusions and misreadings are important because they are typical of the know-nothing attitude of an entire class of American intellectuals in relation to Russia; otherwise they would not merit comment at all.

New York City. EUGENE LYONS.

SIR: I perceive with pain and regret that I too have been misread and misinterpreted. Nowhere have I condoned or apologized for the violence of Russia's system of justice. I stated in so many words that the situation admitted of no apologetics.

If Mr. Lyons were more logical, he would grant, as I do, that the authority of modern "civilized" states rests, in the last analysis, upon force of some kind. The application of force, however, varies: from its sagacious use in Tory England, with its model Bill of Rights, to its often naïve application in our own great democracy of Jersey Cities and Chicagos (remember Memorial Day?) to its beautifully candid use by Italy in Spain and by Japan in China.

If American hands were lily-white I might be quicker to offer some confident prescription to the Soviets for abolishing their police system and disarming their Red Army. But with Russian socialists looking into the teeth of the two huge military machines on either side of them, just now, I feel humbler about judging who is guilty and what to do than Mr. Lyons.

Mr. Lyons implies that in former years, as in 1932, persons like myself kept Americans misinformed or uninformed about true conditions in Soviet Russia. Yet it was not I, but Mr. Eugene Lyons, who, serving at that time as a foreign correspondent at Moscow for a great newspaper syndicate, was sending us *admittedly* inaccurate reports.

Those further interested in these problems I refer to what I actually wrote on these issues as differentiated from what Mr. Lyons says that I wrote.

Sherman, Conn. MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

Coöperation to Help China

SIR: I am impressed alike by the futility and immorality on the one side of a policy of attempted isolation and on the other side by the dangers of rushing heedlessly into the almost unexplored field of economic sanctions. But I think there are paths in between that can be safely followed, granted courage and leadership; and, as I have had perhaps unusual opportunities of study and observation of both political and military problems in the Far East, I am inclined to regard the risk of being involved in war there perhaps a little more realistically and certainly with less apprehension that war will eventuate than many of my compatriots. Thus, while I regard any suggestion of sending armies to Asia or attempting to blockade Asiatic ports or any other warlike action as not only politically impossible but as a futile and wrong method of procedure, I think that the past few years have already offered opportunities when things could have been done entirely without crossing the watershed of war which would (1) avoid the stultification of our national conscience following inaction; (2) permit our nationals morally to encourage and perhaps physically to help China; and (3) somewhat prevent our nationals from helping Japan.

As I have said many times and in many places, the problem of saving the future civilization of eastern Asia depends on the people of China. They have begun this belatedly and are therefore now fighting for freedom against great odds largely furnished by the nationals of Great Britain and ourselves. I think in the long run (and in China time is counted by decades and centuries instead of years) her people will be successful. But, with our modern interconnected and fragile civilization, that may result in a very considerable mess for us in the meanwhile. I therefore believe that every possible effort in coöperation with other nations who think as we do or who will follow intelligent and vigorous leadership on our part should be attempted. Granted such leadership, the danger of this country being "left out on a limb" is so insignificant as well as puerile that it ought not to be weighed in the balance. Even the occurrence of five years ago—so often cited as a case of being left out on a limb by persons really ignorant of what happened—is proof of this. Persistent leadership on the part of this government and a refusal to be discouraged by Great Britain's initial rebuff of the non-recognition proposal, in a few weeks persuaded the British government to reverse its first attitude and actively lead the entire Assembly of the League of Nations to adopt a non-recognition policy, which has lasted intact until almost the present moment; resulted in a unanimous formal judgment of guilt against Japan at Geneva in 1933; and thus created for the first time in history the precedent of the formal condemnation of a great power. This I believe will be of marked value in the future after the present period of international dislocation is ended and the world's march toward a reign of law is resumed.

New York City. HENRY L. STIMSON.

Q. E. D.

SIR: May I summarize the recent letter of Henry Pratt Fairchild [The New Republic, December 15] on Japanese exclusion?

1. All aliens "ineligible to citizenship in the United States" are excluded.
2. The Japanese are such aliens.
3. Therefore there is no "Japanese Exclusion Act."

Detroit, Mich. DONALD L. MACNEAL.

To Aid the Polish Jews

SIR: Perhaps the most significant commentary upon Mr. Herbert J. Seligmann's excellent analysis of the present situation of the Jews in Europe, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe ("Jewish Faith—Christian Civilization," published in The New Republic of December 8) is the following declaration issued by a large group of Polish writers and professors in connection with the recent brutal pogroms upon Jews in the cities of Brzesc and Chenstochowa:

> The pogroms in Brzesc and Chenstochowa are the latest developments in the criminal activities carried on in different parts of the country. Polish public opinion has too long remained silent regarding this matter, which is a danger to the culture of Poland. The attacks upon the helpless, pauperized Jewish population; the destruction and looting of the workshops of small artisans; the beating and persecution of Jewish students in universities; the resolution of different organizations to exclude Jewish colleagues—these are the facts that preceded the events in Brzesc and Chenstochowa. . . . It is a disgrace that such things should take place in independent Poland. . . . In the name of the highest traditions of the Polish nation, in the name of the democratic ideals of freedom thanks to which we have regained an independent Poland, we call upon everybody to fight against this barbarism.

We American writers have heard this call from the writers of Poland. We have formed a Writers' Committee to Aid the Polish Jews. It is our aim, through the press and public forums, to bring the plight of more than three million Polish Jews to the attention of the American people, and also to assist and encourage in every possible way those democratic and progressive intellectuals within Poland who believe with us that this persecution of a minority is not only a blot upon the name of the Polish Republic but also a threat to world peace.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We call upon those interested readers of The New Republic to get in touch with us at 611 West One Hundred and Thirteenth Street, New York City.

DOROTHY MCCLEARY, LEON DENNEN, MILLEN BRAND, STOYAN CHRISTOWE, DANIEL FUCHS, GEORGE ALBEE, LEANE ZUGSMITH, KYLE CRICHTON, NANCY HALE, LOUIS KRONENBERGER, BENJAMIN APPEL.

New York City.

More about the Capital-Gains Tax

SIR: Your editorial "Twin Villain—Tax on Capital Gains" [The New Republic, December 15], thought it unfair that the taxpayer who made an occasional profitable sale should be taxed, and with that you dismissed the incident. The federal income-tax law, however, gives the occasional investor a "break" and tends to discriminate against the speculator who waits for a price rise and may trade daily.

Section 117-a sets up a series of percentages which individual taxpayers are entitled to use when reporting gains or losses from the sale or exchange of capital assets. The percentages vary according to the length of time the property was owned before selling or trading. In computing net income:

100% gain or loss must be reported if the asset was owned.....	1 year or less
80% gain or loss must be reported if the asset was owned.....	1 year to 2 years
60% gain or loss must be reported if the asset was owned.....	2 years to 5 years
40% gain or loss must be reported if the asset was owned.....	5 years to 10 years
30% gain or loss must be reported if the asset was owned.....	over 10 years

A taxpayer who gained $2,000 from the sale of a house, stocks or bonds which he owned for ten years would report only 30 percent of $2,000, or $600, as income. If he had owned the property less than one year, then the entire $2,000 must be reported as income. After setting up a table of capital gains and losses for one year, an individual or a corporation is permitted to deduct a loss of $2,000 only in one year. However, in case a property becomes obsolete or worthless, the entire loss can be deducted.

The percentages reported above are for the use of individual taxpayers only and not by corporations. It can be seen that the law encourages investments over longer periods for income purposes rather than short-time speculative plunging which makes for instability of the economic system.

The opponents of this section on capital gains and losses object to the inclusion of gains made in selling stocks and bonds and other property as income, because, they say, "it is not income." England is used as a basis, because her system does not tax capital gains. To refute in a few words—the British tax everything else at heavier rates, and with less evasion. Should the United States change this provision on capital gains, only the speculators would gain—not the public.

Akron, O. SOL L. AUERBACH.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Wilbur LaRoe Jr. of Washington, D. C., thinks the title of Herbert Seligmann's article, "Jewish Faith—Christian Civilization," (December 8) is misleading. "For the love o' mike," he writes, "don't call those nations 'Christian' which are subjecting the Jews to inhuman and barbarous cruelty." . . . L. I. Bogen of Lincoln, Nebraska, writes that the government charges rates on loans to veterans' insurance policy holders just as high as those charged by private insurance companies about which T. R. B. wrote in the December 8 issue. "If any investigation is to be made on that score," he says, "it should start with the government veterans' insurance." . . . Henry Haskell of Croton-on-Hudson, New York, believes that the opposition of Socialists to "collective security" ought to receive attention in our pages. He points out that their conclusions are very similar to those expressed by Bruce Bliven in "Collective Insecurity" (December 1).

Joseph Adams of Mt. Vernon, New York, says all his experience of five years spent in the USSR affirms the point of view expressed in Matthew Josephson's review, "Russia and Some Utopians," in The New Republic for December 1. . . . E. H. Russell of New York City despairs of making head or tail out of the last paragraphs of Fred Rodell's review of Thurman Arnold's "The Folklore of Capitalism" in the December 15 issue, but the sentence with which he takes particular issue is, "I think Mr. Arnold has his fingers on something miles ahead of Marx—in maturity, acceptability and, especially, present usefulness." . . . Grace Lumpkin, treasurer of the Southern Summer School for women workers in industry, whose winter offices are at 302 East Thirty-fifth Street, New York City, appeals for funds to help carry on the work of education in North Carolina that has been in progress for the past eleven years. . . . George Magyar of San Francisco, California, thinks that the United States ought to participate actively in "collective security" with the other nations of the world because, without this country, peace through this method is impossible. He places the blame for Italy's conquest of Ethiopia on the shoulders of the United States for its failure to help England in applying sanctions.

A murmur of protest against our editorial "Trophy," (December 15) which praised the Pennsylvania game laws, comes from Henry Chapin who lives in New Hope, Pennsylvania. He says that his farm is overrun with hunters of all sizes armed with high-powered rifles, shooting wildly at anything that moves. . . . Dan McCarton of Coshocton, Ohio, says that Trotsky reminds him of Aaron Burr and that Stalin reminds him of Oliver Cromwell.

Miss Jenny Ballou of Short Beach, Connecticut, is preparing a study of Ella Wheeler Wilcox and her times for Houghton Mifflin Company. She asks readers for copies of letters from Miss Wilcox and for any memories of the poet which her friends or acquaintances may have. . . . Norman Thomas as chairman of the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief, 112 East Nineteenth Street, sends us an urgent appeal for funds to support the men and families who will depend on it during the coming winter. Checks should be made payable to Reinhold Niebuhr, treasurer.

Mrs. Anne W. McNally of the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, 110 West Fortieth Street, New York City, writes of the New Year's Eve Fiesta to be held at the Starlight Roof of the Waldorf-Astoria. Admission is $12.50 per person and the proceeds will go to the maintenance of the eight American hospitals in Spain, established by the Bureau. Reservations may be obtained from the Bureau's office or from the Waldorf-Astoria.

What's on the Air?

"Twelve Crowded Months," a dramatization of the dozen most important news stories of the year chosen by a poll of editors, is presented Friday, December 24, 9 P.M., CBS.

King George VI broadcasts his Christmas message from London, Saturday, December 25, 10 A.M., CBS and NBC-Red and Blue Networks.

"Headlines of 1937," a dramatization of the ten most important news stories of the year, chosen by the Associated Press editors, is presented Saturday, December 25, 9 P.M., NBC-Red Network.

Governor Herbert H. Lehman of New York speaks on the New York State Unemployment Insurance Law, Monday, December 27, 6 P.M., CBS.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt speaks on behalf of the Alliance for the Guidance of Rural Youth, Wednesday, December 29, 10:45 P.M., CBS.

Musical programs of the week include a broadcast of Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" by the Metropolitan Opera Company, Saturday, December 25, 1:55 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; Christmas carols by the English Boy Choristers, Saturday, December 25, 3:45 P.M., CBS; the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York with Guiomar Novaes as soloist, Sunday, December 26, 3 P.M., CBS; and Lawrence Tibbett on a program in a series featuring American music, Wednesday, December 29, 9 P.M., CBS.

The attention of listeners in the vicinity of New York City is called to Station WQXR, which, with a minimum of advertising, presents a program consisting very largely of classical and light-classical music.

All times given are Eastern Standard Time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Nobel Prize Novel[1]

BOTH IN his own country and abroad, Roger Martin du Gard was as little known as any writer who ever won the Nobel Prize. It was not that his career had been unsuccessful. His older books had been kept in print; his newer ones were favorably reviewed and were even sold in fair-sized editions. But the author himself had a positive taste and talent for remaining obscure. Once he had said, "As for literature, write it if you must, but for God's sake don't talk about it." Acting on this principle, he refused to give lectures or statements or get involved in literary quarrels or raise his voice at public meetings; and except for the few weeks that followed the publication of a novel, he managed to efface himself completely from the public mind.

When the good news came over the wire from Sweden, his apartment in Nice was besieged by a small army of journalists and camera men, local, Parisian and foreign. There was nobody at home. Having been notified about an hour before the newspapers, Martin du Gard had taken a traveling bag and vanished, after telling the concierge that he was leaving for a trip. A search began that soon extended over all France. Trains were inspected, hotel registers paged through, the police were on guard, there was a special watch at the frontier. In Paris the rumor spread that Martin du Gard had been assassinated—by whom, nobody knew, for he had no enemies.

Meanwhile the object of the search had stolen back to his own apartment, very late at night, and was sitting there alone with the shutters closed, exactly like John Dillinger in a Chicago hideout. Telegrams, cablegrams, letters of congratulation, publishers' offers, radio contracts, all were piling up unread in the concierge's office. For two days the Nobel prizeman lived on ham and eggs, and trembled at every shuffle of feet outside the barred door.

In the back files of French magazines, I managed to find a few additional facts about his life and work. Roger Martin du Gard was born in 1881, to a moderately prosperous, moderately republican, moderately Catholic family of lawyers and magistrates. He attended a moderately good Paris *lycée*. Afterwards he entered the Ecole des Chartes, where he studied, of all things, archeology. Taking advantage of a small inherited income, he decided to become a writer and, except for his years in the army, he has never practised any other profession.

His first novel, "Devenir!" was published in 1908. It made no great stir in the world, but it led to his becoming acquainted with the group surrounding the Nouvelle Revue Française—Gide, Rivière, Copeau, Schlumberger and others—serious writers concerned with ethics and esthetics and corresponding roughly to the Bloomsbury group in London; these have remained his closest friends. In 1913 he published a second novel, "Jean Barois," dealing with the Dreyfus case and with an unbeliever who returns to the Church. I am told that it exercised a considerable influence on the pre-war generation, among whom questions of religious faith seemed all-important.

At this point the novelist's career, like so many others, was interrupted by the War. Martin du Gard served in the military transport, commanding a section of thirty-six trucks on all the fronts from Alsace to the Somme. When he returned to civilian life it was with the project for a new novel, longer and more ambitious than anything he had done before. "Les Thibault" was to deal with the fortunes of two Paris families, one Catholic and the other Protestant, during the years before 1914. It was to appear in a whole series of volumes, which the author hoped to publish at intervals of about six months.

For the first two years, he kept to his schedule. "Le Cahier Gris" and "Le Pénitencier" appeared in 1922 and the two volumes of "La Belle Saison" in 1923. These first sections were translated and published here in 1926 ("The Thibaults"; Liveright, 2 vols., $5), and I happened to be one of the very few Americans who read them. They recounted the early life of two brothers: the younger and more gifted, Jacques, ran away from home and, after being caught, was sent to a Catholic reform school; the older and more conventional, Antoine, studied medicine and fell in love with a cheap actress. Most of our critics praised the story—although H. L. Stuart, in The Sunday Times, was sorry to find that it contained "some passages disconcerting in their cold and deliberate sensuality." But "The Thibaults" simply did not reach the public—possibly because the price was too high, or the translation a little awkward, or the advertising scanty and misdirected, or simply because people had trouble pronouncing the title.

For at least twelve years, that ended the experiment of translating Martin du Gard. Even in the original French his novel was moving ahead quite slowly; the fifth and sixth volumes did not appear until 1928. They continued the story of the brothers Thibault: Antoine had become a busy young physician; Jasques had disappeared once more; after a series of desperate adventures in France and North Africa he had made a place for himself in Switzerland as a journalist. In "La Mort du Père" (1929) the brothers were reunited at the deathbed of their bigoted father.

An eighth volume was ready for publication in 1930. It was called "L'Appareillage"—"Under Sail" would be a rough translation—and it dealt, so I hear, with Jacques Thibault's life in Geneva among a group of Socialist and Anarchist exiles from every country in the world. Just before sending the manuscript to his publishers, Martin du Gard had an accident that kept him in the hospital for several weeks. He brooded over his novel, grew more and more dissatisfied, and decided that "L'Appareillage" had better be destroyed. Shortly afterwards he set to work on "L'Eté 1914," a section that took him six years to finish. Except for an Epilogue still to be published, it completes the project he conceived at the end of the War.

"Summer of 1914" would be a long novel in itself: it was published in three volumes containing 1,030 pages of text, exactly as many as "Gone with the Wind." The action is confined to the forty-four days between the crime at Serajevo, on June 28, and the French retreat from Alsace on August 10. The principal characters are still the brothers Thibault. Jacques has fallen in love with Jenny Fontanin, daughter of the Protestant family he has known since childhood. Antoine, with a fashionable mistress, is really in love with his career. Both the brothers have widened their circle of activities—Antoine is now a successful surgeon

[1] L'Eté 1914, by Roger Martin du Gard. Paris: Librairie Gallimard. 3 vols. 51 francs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and has a Cabinet Minister as one of his patients; Jacques is high in the councils of the Socialist International—with the result that their personal story is transformed into the story of how Europe drifted into war.

On this subject, Martin du Gard writes impressively. With his archeological training, he seems to have studied all the available documents; and he has reduced them to as simple a narrative, as clear a statement, as any honest student could achieve. He neglects the munitions trust, but everything else is included and everyone receives his share of blame—in the front rank, the deliberate war-makers like Berchtold and Isvolsky, who knew just what they were doing; then the Austrian and German and Russian general staffs; then, on a second plane of guilt, the cold legalists like Poincaré who did nothing to hold Russia back (indeed they encouraged her to mobilize) and the noble souls like Sir Edward Grey who might have discouraged either side simply by saying frankly what they proposed to do. ("A fire broke out in Central Europe. The fuel was gathered in Vienna; the spark came from Serbia, and Russia blew on the flame—with the incomprehensible consent of France. As for England, she had a large supply of water that would have been more than enough to put out the fire, but she contented herself with crying, "Help, help!")

So much for the nations as represented by their great conservative statesmen. But Martin du Gard also describes the role of the Socialists, and I should like to discuss that question next week. MALCOLM COWLEY.

Our Reigning Families

America's 60 Families, by Ferdinand Lundberg. New York: The Vanguard Press. 566 pages. $3.75.

THE CRISIS that began with the stock-market crash of 1929 has so enriched our sociological literature that a bibliography of the period would lead one to believe that a better society was just around the corner. Mr. Lundberg's is the latest and one of the most useful in a series of notable works that have subjected one aspect after another of American capitalism to revaluation and analysis. Running through them all is a sense of the impotence to which political democracy is reduced by economic inequality, of the incongruity between the free citizen at the ballot box and the anxious creature at the paymaster's window, of the existence of economic sovereignties so vast that they overawe the State. Here lies the irreconcilable conflict of our age.

Unfortunately irreconcilables have an annoying habit of reconciling themselves for a long time. A consciousness of the discrepancy between democracy and plutocracy (the shabbiness of the word attests its long abuse by demagogues) has been recurrent in American politics. It rings in the debates over ratification of the Constitution and it reëchoes in every period of popular revolt. It is the politician's delight and the reformer's despair. For the concentration of economic power in a few hands has weathered each successive spasm of protest and is today, as Mr. Lundberg shows, greater than ever. After a century and a half of Jeffersons, Jacksons, Lincolns and Roosevelts; Anti-Federalists, Democrats, Barn-Burners, Abolitionists, Populists, Progressives and New Dealers; muckrakers, denouncers, investigators and crusaders, Mr. Lundberg can write:

> The United States is owned and dominated today by a hierarchy of sixty of the richest families, buttressed by no more than ninety families of lesser wealth. . . . These families are the living center of the modern industrial oligarchy which dominates the United States, functioning discreetly under a *de-jure* democratic form of government behind which a *de-facto* government, absolutist and plutocratic in its lineaments, has gradually taken form since the Civil War.

Mr. Lundberg, author of "Imperial Hearst," is a former financial reporter for The New York Herald Tribune and his comprehensive study of the power exercised by our wealthiest families is written with the fury piled up in several years of personal participation in the processes by which the gigantic thieveries of Wall Street are perfumed and pomaded for public inspection. His work is based upon specialized studies, the records of a generation of congressional investigation committees, each of them a nine days' wonder in its time, and personal contact with financial figures and events. He gives us the flora and fauna of plutocracy: the industrial empires that pay tribute to the great families, their imperial expenditures, their influence on the government since 1896, the aggrandizement of their fortunes by the World War, their alley-cat moral code from the days of Standard Oil to those of the Van Sweringens, their control of the press, their use of philanthropy as an instrument for the perpetuation of economic power, their jewels, parties, charities, yachts and foibles. Finally, perhaps somewhat irrelevantly, Mr. Lundberg discusses the New Deal.

No review can do justice to the rich material crowded into Mr. Lundberg's five hundred pages. No one who reads them, for example, will ever feel the same again about Theodore Roosevelt's progressivism or Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom. J. P. Morgan and Company, Mr. Lundberg shows, made its greatest progress under the "trust buster," *with his coöperation;* "Wilson's nomination represented a personal triumph for Cleveland H. Dodge, director of the National City Bank, scion of the Dodge copper and munitions fortune," and the Dodge interests were amply repaid. Mr. Lundberg's chapter on "Philanthropy, or Non-Commercial Investment" will undo the work of a generation of press agents. So will his discussion of "Education for Profit and Tax Exemption." His survey of American journalism will earn him an honorable place on the blacklist of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association.

It is unfortunate that so important a book as Mr. Lundberg's should be marred by certain flaws of style and thought. The style is full of clichés and colloquialisms: "The magnates, frightened by the grim-faced Bryanites, threw money about like sailors in a brothel"; insurance companies "generously coughed up their policy-holders' funds" for an election campaign; "The White House [under Harding] became, quite simply, a political dive." Only an academic eunuch could cover Mr. Lundberg's subjects without passion, but sometimes one wishes he were more judicious. The fact that rich families, for example, often endow special hospital or medical facilities for diseases from which they or their families have suffered can hardly be condemned as mere self-interest. Mr. Lundberg's portraits tend to be two-dimensional. He invokes Marx and Veblen, but his analyses too often are in terms of human wickedness or duplicity rather than in terms of economic and social compulsives. He is less than fair to the progressives of the past and too trusting toward the progressives of the present. In his estimate of the New Deal, Mr. Lundberg is prone to accept at face value reforms whose counterparts under Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson he dismisses with a sneer. I. F. STONE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poets' Page

Such Counsels You Gave to Me, and Other Poems, by Robinson Jeffers. New York: Random House. 129 pages. $2.50.

JEFFERS has taken the large inward theme on which his finest work rests, and in his latest book has done an incest-tragedy in the meanings which he has specialized: guilt, ambition, conquest of tabu, conquest of nature and civilization into a unique assertion. But in the title poem the story is truncated, the return is to infancy, not to birth, the act is not committed. The son, in a knot of college chemistry and family, goes home after failing a mid-term exam. His father, presented throughout with a beast-image (". . . the powerful coarse-fibered man, an inch less tall/ And twice as broad, sunburnt and wind-bitten, dark-haired, /And the eyes paler blue, like the eyes of domestic swine, Howard thought, the white ones") stands as a quite ordinary business man, refusing to repair his son by giving him thirty dollars a month. The mother, the Jeffers woman again, is the clew: beautiful, powerful, frustrated (the Main Street frustration gone west), she has the Jeffers-woman consciousness of superiority to her husband, and plays off her son continually against him. This time, the child is near breakdown from exhaustion, the lost hope that he may finish college, excitement over progress in chemical research, and the load of guilt and suspicion placed on him by his love for his mother. The story is a filled-in and up-to-date version of the bare magnificent ballad from which the title comes. The variations depend on the bottle of KCN, the atmosphere of an outer world full of threats and war, the showing of the mother's breasts as climax, and the frightening and vivid scenes with the son's *Doppelgänger,* seen white and merging on the hills at the beginning and the end. The hallucination walks beside him after the murder, after the mother's love has been offered and refused; and the son decides to stand trial.

The second half of the book shuttles between description which has already sealed the Carmel coast and the country behind it as Jeffers' country, recognizable in the sea, the tangled shore, the colors of hills and passes, the one hawk always hanging in the air—all this which has made him a great place-poet, and defined a meaning for his district—between such description and rabid attacks on man's beliefs, attempts and struggles not to acquiesce. Integrity, he repeats, truth, loneliness. But they appear in attacks so mixed and meaningless, so half-true in their insistence, that, reading these shorter poems, one is tempted to accept only the half that rests on emotion for quality or place, setting aside every mental step. But it is impossible to treat an important poet as a submental type, even when he has thrown all the names in one bag, and spills out for condemnation Spain, China, Russia, Germany, Power, Lenin, Caesar, Humanity. The mess of ideas is shocking. Jeffers has, powerfully, hatred of violent will; but he has even more strongly what Joseph Conrad called the "desire for finality," a superstition, a religion, a blood-need for climax that urges him, fearing a stupid and brutal crowd, to bury the race; and, fearing imperfect love, into its extremities. And this makes tragic poetry, great wishes for perfection, choked demands for peace—and, for solution, total destruction (Jeffers is totalitarian, too) or a walk in the hills ("I wish you could find the secure value, the all-heal I found") and an end like this:

. . . rich unplanned life on earth
After the foreign wars and the civil wars, the border wars
And the barbarians: music and religion, honor and mirth
Renewed life's lost enchantment. But if life even
Had perished utterly, Oh perfect loveliness of earth and heaven.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Poems: 1929-1936, by Dudley Fitts. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 53 pages. $2.

THERE is nothing worse to say of Mr. Fitts's verse than that it dwells too much in its ancestral halls, so that when it comes out to do its necessary business in the open it behaves with a bundle of manners rather more often than it acts in a given style. The skillful reader will know what action was invoked, or avoided, because he will recognize the manners resorted to, and remember their original expressive strength. This is to say that Mr. Fitts has been inspired by the verbal forms of his immediate masters—Pound, Eliot, Cummings, and the Christian ritual—and not by the sensibility that compelled the forms. He does not use the instruments of his masters, because he is contented with recombinations of their verbal effects. The result is a body of verse that shows singular indifference to wholeness of form and clarity of purpose, but which shows also a remarkable adroitness in managing features of form and fragments of purpose.

Adroitness of management—all the *game* of poetry—is a perpetual minor excitement to appreciate, and if you do not ask anything further Mr. Fitts will give you a great deal of pleasure in his better work and only an irrelevant irritation in his poorer. He is an amateur in both senses of the word; he loves making verse for its own sake—you feel the relish in the lines; and he is unprofessional—his mastery of his medium is seldom consistent and never persists through a whole poem. His ordinary riches are in cadence and variety of speed without benefit of the binding strength of meter; his great riches are in those overtones of meaning which are obtained by letting choice words play upon each other so as to produce the novelty of accident. He exemplifies, throughout, the first line of his book: "The pleasure of poets' tongues is a crazy candy."

R. P. BLACKMUR.

Country Men, by James Hearst. With a foreword by Ruth Suckow. Muscatine, Iowa: The Prairie Press. 45 pages. $2.

Recently some of our pastoral poets have become pretentious and strident; at least one has developed a bellow, more suitable for hog-calling than praise of the rural scene. These charges cannot be made against James Hearst. Genuineness, simplicity, directness, all the solid virtues we expect from the true poet of the land, are his. What he lacks is the ability to trim his lines of the commonplace and give authority to his climaxes. Poems like "After the People Go" and "Inquiry" are most successful. With this volume James Hearst joins the company of good craftsmen like Howard McKinley Corning of Oregon and Lawrence Lee of Virginia, whose work has become identified with a particular section of the country. T. R.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some Notes on Fiction

Some for the Glory, by Louis Zara. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.75.

MICHAEL HAWKS, the central figure of Louis Zara's third novel, is a patchwork of American political careers. From the time he leaves the orphanage his progress is traced through precinct, ward, city and state politics until he emerges promisingly upon the national scene. The author displays a thorough knowledge of political machines and those who fight to control them: the reader will find the variety of characterizations of these men the most rewarding feature of the book. The main story is handicapped because it must develop in spirals; its interest depends upon a series of elections, and even if each election is made to seem more important than the last (and an occasional defeat is cleverly inserted), the recapitulation puts a heavy burden on the narrative.

Louis Zara's previous novels had a quality seldom found in the work of his American contemporaries, a family-warmth that gave the stories something of an old-world richness. The present book has none of this, for the shrill political career is dominant. No one could quarrel with the truthfulness with which the career is presented, but it is the truthfulness of a photograph negative held up to the light (outlines, no depth), and it has the same kind of neutral grayness. Perhaps there is implicit satire in the fact that a Michael Hawks could have power over so many human beings, and with their consent. If by any chance satire was actually intended, it is too quiet to be noticed.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE.

Highland River, by Neil M. Gunn. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company. $2.50.

THE FIRST chapter has more life and movement than the rest of this frankly autobiographical novel—tingling action and veracious understanding of the universal small boy, from the moment Kenn bangs the water-pail in resentment against early rising to the moment of pretended modesty over his bare-handed capture of a thirty-pound salmon. The book exhibits loving understanding of boys, of men molded to integrity by the sea, of women who make of marriage and motherhood the unsung mortar holding the world of men together. There is a biography of the salmon which only a Gael could write, for the Gael has loved and lived by the salmon thousands of years. Little stories of poaching forays are done from life; but the book is bogged down by numberless excursions into psychology and philosophy which are neither original nor persuasive.

The central idea is that the boy who grew up near the mouth of the "Highland River" comes to regard it as a symbol, and at the age of thirty-seven sets out to find the source of the stream and the meaning of life. His very sound conclusion is that the inherent integrity of "the folk," the plain men and women of the world who wrest a living from nature, is the real glory of the past and the best hope of the future. But as the author has already said the same thing in a score of passages, the climax lacks excitement. There is a brief passage more interesting than all these speculations: it refers to the incredible betrayal of the Scots crofters by their lairds, and to the legacy of poverty thus forced upon them. This story, singularly little known, deserves full telling.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL.

Rehearsal in Oviedo, by Joseph Peyré. Translated by R. H. Torres. New York: Knight Publications. $2.

THIS NOVEL is concerned with the revolt of the Asturian miners in 1934, which, quickly crushed by the Civil Guard, later exploded into full-fledged revolution. Morenú, the miner, embodies the ideals of the New Commonwealth. For it he is fighting, in contrast to those entering the revolt for adventure or gain. Morenú is presented less as an individual than as a symbol of the energy impelling the Spaniards in these tragic times. He has their faith, seriousness, courage, that sense of starting up from slumber to launch a vigorous onslaught upon tyranny. The author, Joseph Peyré, has been compared to Ernest Hemingway, but the winner of the 1935 Prix Goncourt, however, is not much like Mr. Hemingway in "Rehearsal in Oviedo." His style is more filled out, written out and—if one may say so—less eccentric. Its force lies not in oddity, telescoping of phrase, but in the meat under the language. There is nothing especially remarkable about M. Peyré's manner of writing. It is what he is saying that seems to matter.

BEVERLY THURMAN.

The Rains Come, by Louis Bromfield. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.75.

This latest Bromfield novel is set in a province of India where Westerners are generally symbols of their barren, decadent civilization and natives all have "smoldering vitalities" under their somber exteriors. With the scene well stocked with color and ingeniously laid out in design, the flood breaks through, swelling dramatically over the dam, pouring through the Untouchable Quarter, and carrying off hovels and palaces alike. With a power to convert which is less reasonable than its energy, it also washes away the fatuous cliques of society, the sterility and boredom of the Westerners, the utter selfishness of their aims; and it leaves a purified province whose inhabitants suddenly cultivate noble thoughts and actions. Readability high; authenticity high (as regards background); credibility low.

M. B.

The Merry Merry Maidens, by Helen Grace Carlisle. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Ruth, the narrator of "The Merry Merry Maidens," believed in Love, and I strongly suspect that she and the author stacked the cards against those of the maidens who didn't. Fate did not pursue the hero of a Greek tragedy more relentlessly than love and marriage hounded these hapless females. Of the six friends whose story unfolds over twenty years, only the plain and earnest Bertha, who married a bearded Bolshevik, and the domestic Ruth succumbed early and were happy. At the other extreme was Carol, a successful journalist, who had to be blinded and her suitor beggared before they capitulated to marriage and felicity. By 1937, after playing their varied roles against the backdrop of world affairs, each Jill had her Jack or a satisfactory substitute. Though there are moments of insight into character, of truth and terror and valid emotion, the effectiveness of the book is hampered by the substitution of unfair plotting for plot, and by a style oversimplified to the point of dullness.

F. B. F.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Exposé

IS OUR State Department working with Franco? The accusation is voiced by American observers in Europe, and the grounds for their suspicion are outlined by Jay Allen.

Norman Thomas

POINTS OUT the dangers of a policy which would align the United States with European democracies in a united front against the fascist powers.

Public Housing

IN AN EFFORT to spur recovery the Administration is laying the groundwork for a building boom. Marquis Childs gives us a revealing article on the status of public housing. He will be remembered as the author of "They Hate Roosevelt."

THE Nation
The Left Prepares for War
BY LUDWIG LORE
No Time for Economy
BY KEITH HUTCHISON
Rebellion in Rebel Spain
BY LEIGH WHITE
CHRISTMAS BOOK NUMBER
Reviews by Marvin Lowenthal, Edmund Wilson, Paul M. Sweezy, Sidney Hook, Ralph Linton
10 CENTS A COPY FOUNDED IN 1865 FIVE DOLLARS A YEAR

THESE articles, and many more equally provocative, are booked for early appearance in THE NATION. If you are a progressive you will want America's most influential liberal weekly.

TRY 17 ISSUES FOR $1.00

In those 17 issues you will find 119 courageous articles by leading writers, 170 stimulating editorial paragraphs, 51 full-length editorials, and 136 reviews of books, plays, films and records.

THE NATION, 20 Vesey Street, New York City

I wish to accept your introductory offer. Send me the next 17 issues for the dollar which I enclose.

Name.....

Address.....

NR 12-29

New Books: A Reader's List

SANDRO BOTTICELLI, with an Introduction by Lionello Venturi (Oxford, $3). One of the admirable art books that are being published by the Phaidon Press in Vienna. The text is neither very good nor—fortunately—very long. But the 101 full-page plates are better than anything else by or about Botticelli that is available at a price within reach of ordinary book buyers. Fourteen of his principal paintings are reproduced in color.

TRIAL AND ERROR, by Anthony Berkeley (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). A detective novel with a twist: the story of a man who has only a few months to live and wants to do his bit for the good life by committing a murder, but has to hire a detective to help prove that he did it. Amusing satire on courts and mores.

AMERICAN WOMEN: VOLUME II, edited by Durward Howes (American Publications, $10). The second of the biennial editions of a Who's Who among American women. The present volume contains biographies of 7,851 prominent women—1,647 more than received the accolade in the 1935-36 publication—and includes new material which brings up to date the biographies printed in the first edition. Special features for reference purposes are the statistical summary, geographic and occupational indices and lists of organizations.

Contributors

HAROLD M. GROVES, former member of the Wisconsin Legislature and of the Wisconsin Tax Commission, is professor of Public Finance at the University of Wisconsin. He was the author of a series of articles published in The New Republic in 1933 under the general title, "A Tax Policy for the United States."

MORRIS L. COOKE is a consulting engineer who, until his recent resignation from the Rural Electrification Administration, was vice-chairman of the National Power Policy Committee.

PAUL LOVE, author, lecturer and critic of the dance, writes a monthly column in Dance Magazine and is finishing a dictionary of Modern Dance Terms for publication in the spring.

LEONARD J. SCHWEITZER has for the past five years traveled as a student of world affairs. He has contributed to periodicals in England and the United States. His home at present is in Shavertown, Pennsylvania.

CONRAD PENDLETON is a young poet living in Portland, Oregon. His aim is to write poems with "the rhythm, the idiom, the earth of Oregon in them."

I. F. STONE is an editorial writer on The New York Post and author of "The Court Disposes," published last spring by Covici, Friede.

MURIEL RUKEYSER is the author of a book of poems, "Theory of Flight," and has contributed poems and reviews to The New Republic, Poetry, The New Masses, Dynamo and other magazines.

R. P. BLACKMUR, a Guggenheim fellow for 1937, is the author of "The Double Agent," a book of essays, and "From Jordan's Delight," a book of verse published by Arrow Editions.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL, poet and critic, is now living in Barrytown, New York.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE is literary editor of The Beacon, Chicago's liberal magazine.

BEVERLY THURMAN works for the Havas News Agency in New York City.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Theodore Roethke, Miriam Borgenicht and Florence B. Freedman.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED